

FOREWORD

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The first six months of 2019 has proven to be interesting on the international front. The USA-China trade wars have dominated the international arena and most stock markets took some form of hit – from which they are still recovering. Since the G20 summit in July 2019, the USA and china have indicated a willingness to start trade discussions in order to prevent further tax impositions on imported goods. This has led to a temporary rally in the stock markets and only time will tell how soon there will be an end to this uncertainty.

With Britain due to elect a new prime minister in July/August the clear front runner is Boris Johnson – who is advocating a BREXIt with or without a plan by end October. This has let to some major concerns from politicians as well as businesses that it can be detrimental to the economy as a whole. There are major concerns regarding the feasibility of a Brexit exit without a strategy and this will lead to possible serious consequences to the British economy.

The South African economy has likewise gone through some turbulent times with the rand weakening to nearly R15 to the dollar. The threat of a downgrade to junk status is still very much on the table and the political climate has not stabilized since the elections of 8 May. This has led to much uncertainty and there is concerns that the political infighting between the various factions in the ANC will have a negative impact on the economy. Another concern for the South African economy is the fact that unemployment has risen to over 27% with no end in sight. The governments plans to create 10 million jobs in the next 10years is nothing but a pipe dream according to business leaders. There are major concerns from business that President Ramaphosa will not be able to negotiate or trump the Zuma loyalists in his cabinet and that they will bring him to a fall in the next year.

It will be interesting to see towards the end of the year what the world economy will be doing. There are major challenges ahead for the international markets as well as the local market and the changing politics on all continents. It is a known fact that changes are taking place and the world of business is not the same as it was only 5 years ago.

Strengthening bank employee job satisfaction through an “internal people” approach – an emerging market perspective

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the extent to which the satisfaction of employees of a selected banking group is influenced by identified “internal people” constructs, namely perceptions of trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership. Data was collected from the employees of a selected banking group through the use of self-administered questionnaires. In total, 248 responses could be used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis and independent sample t-tests were conducted to test the formulated hypotheses. Employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership were found to significantly and positively influence employee satisfaction, while trust and employee empowerment (autonomy in job) did not have a positive and significant influence on employee satisfaction. The model tested endorses the hypothesised relationships between trust, employee empowerment, work conditions, leadership and the job satisfaction of employees of the selected banking group. The results suggest that banks need to have faith in the ability of their employees to perform the job for which they were recruited. The findings should assist the banking industry of an emerging African economy in understanding how employee empowerment (through confidence in the ability of employees), work conditions and leadership can enhance employee job satisfaction. The study focused only on banking employees and determined the extent to which the specified constructs relate to employee satisfaction. Limited research studies have explored how employee satisfaction relates to its antecedents in an emerging African market perspective.

Keywords: Internal marketing, Trust, Employee empowerment, Work conditions, Leadership style, Employee satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The level of service quality experienced by customers can be a tool for differentiation in the competitive banking environment of the new millennium. The actions and behaviours of employees directly influence customers' perceptions of the service rendered by the organisation (Díaz, 2017). In the financial services sector, due to the intangibility and complexity of their product offerings, the role of the workforce has become an integral part of the delivered service. Through an internal marketing approach, positive employee attitudes can be generated that can ultimately lead to employee satisfaction (Huang & Rundle-Thiele, 2015). This is especially important in South Africa considering that the retail banking sector in the country should develop an improved understanding of the importance of employees in the service delivery process through an internal marketing perspective. Internal marketing is a critical strategy to

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ensure that the retail banking sector in South Africa focuses on its employees as internal customers, which could ultimately lead to employee satisfaction and the development of more customer-orientated employees (Reynolds-De Bruin, 2014). Numerous research studies (Ozuem, Limb & Lancaster, 2016; Boukis, Kaminakis, Siampos & Kostopoulos, 2015; Rahmati, Falahati & Jamshedynavid, 2013; Marshall, Baker & Finn, 1998) have investigated the interrelationships of selected elements of the internal marketing mix and their effects on internal service quality and customer loyalty. However, few research studies have investigated how the different constructs of the internal people element (namely trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership) influence employee job satisfaction in the banking environment of an emerging African market. The internal people element of internal marketing has not secured much focus as a relational determinant, especially within a financial services environment (Reynolds-De Bruin, 2014; Omid, Ebrahim & Bagher, 2014).

The foundation of internal marketing is the principle that internal relationships, functions and interactions are required to instil in employees positive views of the organisation's values, thereby inspiring them to deliver external service quality in a professional manner (Biedenbach & Manzhynski, 2016). Internal marketing is regarded as a critical strategy for perceiving employees as internal customers and securing the satisfaction of employee needs so as to enhance external customer satisfaction. For example, efficient internal processes contribute successfully to enhanced levels of employee confidence. The reason is that employees are in a position to perform their jobs more efficiently as they become familiar with the tasks required to deliver an excellent service to the customer. In addition, employees also gain much more empathy and understanding when engaging with external customers (Steyn, Steyn & Van Rooyen, 2011). In this study the concept "internal people", due to its linkage with employee satisfaction, is investigated from the perspective of four variables, namely trust (Semerciöz, Hassan & Aldemir, 2011; Hamed, 2010), employee empowerment (Kahreh, Ahmadi & Hashemi, 2011; Spreitzer, 2007), work conditions (Elanga, 2015; Ali, 2012) and leadership (Sepahvand, Pirzad & Rastipour, 2015; Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa & Nwankwere, 2011). The primary aim of the study was to establish the extent to which the job satisfaction experience of employees is influenced by their perceptions of trust, empowerment, work conditions and leadership.

The contribution of the study to academic theory is that it illustrates that the previously identified relationships between employee job satisfaction and its precursors from an internal people perspective, and not from a general internal marketing mix perspective, in the context of an emerging market. A model was suggested and confirmed that illustrates the relationships between employee job satisfaction and its antecedents within a South African setting. In terms of the managerial contribution, the study could contribute to banking service providers' understanding of how trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership can foster employee job satisfaction, eventually leading to enhanced contentment among employees.

What follows in this article is an explanation of the theories that are the foundation of the study and a discussion of its key constructs. The different hypotheses that are proposed for the study are provided and the proposition of a theoretical model is secured. This is followed by a discussion of the research methodology, the results, a discussion on the theoretical and practical contribution of the study and recommendations made.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Relationship Marketing theory and Social Exchange theory as foundation for the study

Relationship marketing theory and social exchange theory were used as founding theories for the study in terms of the different researched constructs and the proposed relationships between them. Miquel-Romero, Caplliure-Giner and Adame-Sánchez, (2014) propose that the building of sound, positive relationships between the organisation and its employees is a critical element in the relationship marketing literature, where it is referred to as "internal marketing". Employees trust the organisation more if they perceive it to be committed and supportive of them in their need for development and empowerment (Giannakis, Harker & Baum, 2015). Kiarie, Maru and Cheruiyot (2017) state that an inspiring leader will provide organisational direction by securing employee trust, training and empowerment, ultimately leading to employee satisfaction. Therefore, a relationship marketing approach towards employees, founded on internal marketing principles, has to be built on trust, respect and mutual inclusion (Choi & Joung, 2017).

In terms of social exchange theory, the founding principle is the occurrence of exchange between two parties, the quality of which depends on the relationship between the actor (e.g. a leader of a team) and the target (e.g. employees) (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2017). Considering the importance of a relational focus in social exchange theory, Alegre, Mas-Machuca and Berbegal-Mirabent (2016) state that the leadership approach of a supervisor directly influences the level of work satisfaction that the employee experiences. The greater the level of support the supervisor provides for the employee in terms of encouragement, development and empowerment, the more positive the employee feels towards the organisation. According to social exchange theory, parties to a relationship always weigh the benefits and risks associated with the relationship. A positive approach results in a win-win situation for both parties or actors in the relationship. This theory suggests beneficial gain by both parties, as the leader secures the commitment of the employee towards the organisation, and the employee experiences increased levels of job satisfaction, resulting in a willingness to improve service delivery to external customers (Surma, 2016).

The principles of the theories discussed above underlie the arguments of the present authors in hypothesising the relationships between the constructs of the study with regard to the banking industry in South Africa. The hypotheses are directed at determining the extent to which employee satisfaction is influenced by trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership style. From a South African banking industry perspective, no previous study could be found that has used relationship marketing theory and social exchange theory to understand the factors that influence employee satisfaction.

THEORETICAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT

The interrelationship of trust and employee job satisfaction

In the past three decades, organisational research has been characterised by the emergence of trust as an important topic of inquiry (Elangovan, Auer-Rizzi & Szabo, 2015). Trust refers to “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998: 395). When trust is a directorial norm in organisational culture, it creates a platform for the organisation to secure job satisfaction and devoted employees (Mohamed, Kader & Anisa, 2012). Trust between parties is therefore founded on the principle that interaction partners will engage in a cooperative manner that is based on shared norms and values (Chesney, Chuah, Dobebe & Hoffmann, 2017). Considering this, trust can foster a creative environment and innovative behaviours due to the safe atmosphere within the organisation (El-Ghorab, 2013). A high level of organisational trust contributes to high employee motivation, which results in a positive effect on performance (Chow, Cheung & Wa, 2015). Therefore, while other factors in the work environment may contribute to employee satisfaction, employees rely mainly on trust to secure their happiness with their work environment (Mey, Werner & Theron, 2014). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

- H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between trust and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

The interrelationship of employee empowerment and employee job satisfaction

Organisations are starting to recognise the critical function that employee empowerment plays in the modern world. Employee empowerment is viewed by Hanaysha and Tahir (2016), Appelbaum, Louis, Makarenko, Saluja, Meleshko and Kulbashian (2013) and He, Murrmann and Perdue (2010) as an approach for increasing employees’ feelings of added value and contribution in an organisation by enhancing their intellectual independence when making decisions in a working environment. By empowering employees through an internal marketing approach, service of higher quality can be secured for external customers (Kaurav, Paul & Chowdhary, 2015). The empowerment of employees results not only in improved service delivery for customers but also in increased innovativeness and productivity among employees (Burin, Roberts-Lombard & Klopper, 2015; Dalvi & Vahidi, 2013).

When empowerment is encouraged, the employees of the organisation become proactive, which results in greater job satisfaction, whereas if they feel that they have no control, they may withdraw goodwill, which can lower their level

of work productivity (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015). What is often found in many banking organisations is the expectation that employees must strictly follow the official rules and policies that manage the relationships between employees and their customers. Employees are regularly not enabled to use their own initiative or decision making to manage risks through a different approach due to a lack of empowerment (Isimoya & Bakarey, 2013). Therefore, empowerment is an important tool for strengthening the confidence of employees in their own task performance and for securing autonomy in job functioning, resulting in a more efficient and professional service delivery offering to customers (Hume & Hume, 2015; Erkmen & Hancer, 2015). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

H_2 : There is a significant positive relationship between empowerment and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

It should be noted here that hypothesis 2 contains two smaller hypotheses based on an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) dividing employee empowerment into two sub-constructs, namely “employee empowerment (confidence in ability)” and “employee empowerment (autonomy in job)”. The new hypothesis 2 reads as follows:

H_{2a} : There is a significant positive relationship between empowerment (confidence in ability) and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

H_{2b} : There is a significant positive relationship between empowerment (autonomy in job) and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

The interrelationship of leadership and employee job satisfaction

The style of leadership style that management use towards employees should be positively inclined to secure employee satisfaction and job performance (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). Conradie (2012) argues that employees are the backbone of the organisation, and consideration of their needs is critical in securing their satisfaction. Therefore, an engaging and supportive leadership approach towards employee management can secure increased employee commitment, job involvement and satisfaction (Fiaz, Su, Ikram & Saqib, 2017; Joung, Goh, Huffman, Yuan & Surles, 2015). Therefore, leadership requires an understanding of employee needs and wants in order to develop a positive employee attitude, stimulate employee motivation and develop employee engagement through teamwork.

Leaders can motivate employees to do more and even go beyond what is expected, especially when they have a participative approach towards employee management (Ozuem et al., 2016). Khuong and Nhu (2015) state that leadership has a direct influence on the productivity of employees and therefore also on their level of satisfaction. Buble, Juras and Matić (2014) concur, stating that employee satisfaction is directly related to the profitability of the organisation and that leadership is of critical importance in the process. Heyns and Rothmann (2015) and De Jager and Swanepoel (2008) argue that engaging leaders who acknowledge the role of their employees motivate such employees to perform better, with employees also trusting their leadership more. The formation of employee attitudes and behaviours are therefore directly influenced by leadership (Kaurav et al., 2015). Roberts-Lombard and Reynolds-De Bruin (2017) concur, stating that the type of relationship that employees have with their line managers (e.g. supervisors/departmental heads) has a direct influence on their attitude, work ethic and satisfaction.

Therefore, leaders who have an open communication channel to employees are empathetic and attentive to their complaints; and leaders who have an engaging management style are more successful in securing motivated and productive employees who feel satisfied (Kanyurhi & Akonkwa, 2016). As a result, leadership is a critical element in securing employee satisfaction (Alegre et al., 2016). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

H_3 : There is a significant positive relationship between leadership and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

The interrelationship of work conditions and employee job satisfaction

Individuals devote most of their time at work and perceive incentives as important to securing their job satisfaction (Vorina, Simonič & Vlasova, 2017). Yildiz and Kara (2017) and Liu, Kob and Chapleo (2017) postulate that when an organisation provides a rewarding working environment for employees, they are more willing to align their interests with those of the employer, resulting in the creation of an environment that is more beneficial to both parties. Burin et al. (2015) argue that job satisfaction is determined by all of the positive and negative perceptions of employees with regard to their work environment. Quality work environments have been linked to employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment and the subsequent intention to remain employed. According to Ruizalba, Bermúdez-González, Rodríguez-Molina and Blanca (2014), employees tend to become more satisfied and committed to the organisation when they are of the opinion that management is sincerely interested in their personal well-being. Employees are eventually responsible for the creation of organisational wealth. As a result, by motivating them to enhance their overall productivity and delivery, the organisation can secure that its goals are attained (Sharma, Kong & Kingshott, 2016). Considering this, employers provide employees with benefits as motivation to increase job performance and job satisfaction, thereby enhancing employee productivity levels and their commitment to the organisation (Odunlade, 2012). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be formulated for the study:

- H₄: There is a significant positive relationship between work conditions and employee job satisfaction at a selected bank in South Africa.

**FIGURE 1:
PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL**

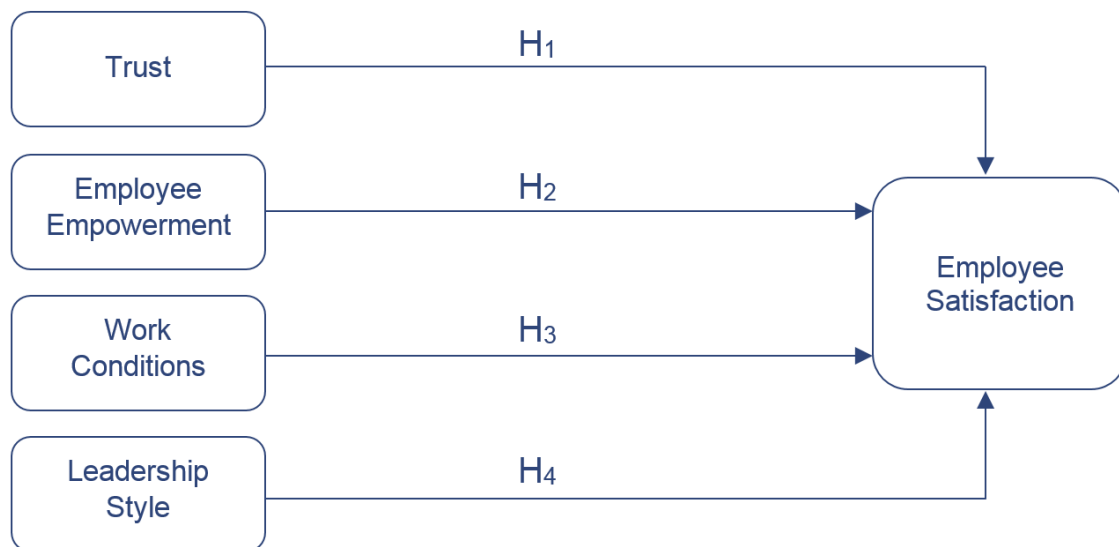


Figure 1 depicts the elements of developing and maintaining a satisfied workforce as well as the hypothesised relationships proposed for the study.

METHODOLOGY

The study applied a descriptive research design (Burns & Bush, 2014), and data was collected from the banking employees of a major retail bank in South Africa. The study flowed from the master's degree dissertation of Pathu Ladzani, published at the University of Johannesburg under the title “The perceived influence of the internal marketing element ‘people’ on internal customer satisfaction”, and the co-author of this article was the supervisor of the dissertation. Considering that the private wealth employee population at the selected bank was small and each of these employees could be contacted with ease at low cost, the study applied a census approach. A census refers to the obtaining of data from the whole population (Wiid & Diggins, 2009). A total of 250 useable questionnaires were collected for analysis. The sample size of 250 respondents was deemed sufficient when considering the minimum sample size of $50 + 4$ (number of independent variables) as suggested by Tabachnik and Fidell (2007).

Data collection was secured through the use of self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire began with an introduction and one screening question to secure that prospective respondents had been with the bank for a period longer than six months. The questionnaire also included sections probing the demographic profile of the respondents and their understanding of internal marketing concepts. Five-point unlabelled Likert-type scales were used to measure the respondents' level of agreement with respect to the constructs of the study. Accordingly items assessing trust, employee empowerment, leadership, work conditions and employee satisfaction were included, where 1 indicated "strongly disagree" and 5 indicated "strongly agree". Scales for measuring the different constructs were adapted from the following authors: Semerciöz et al. (2011) for trust; Westgeest (2011) for employee empowerment; Papathanasiou and Siati (2014) for work conditions; Fowler (2009) for leadership; and Fowler (2009) and Lubbe (2013) for employee satisfaction.

The validity of the study was secured by ensuring that the items in the measurement instrument supported the stated research objectives. A pilot study was conducted that involved 10 respondents who corresponded with the sampling frame, verifying that the questionnaire did indeed measure what it was intended to measure. Cronbach's alpha values were calculated to measure the reliability of the items used in the research instrument. After the data was edited and cleaned it was entered into SPSS 23.0. Using SPSS 23.0, descriptive statistics were calculated to gain insight into the demographic profile of respondents and the 26 items measuring the five constructs of the study. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to uncover the interrelationships of the items measuring the study's constructs (Gaskin, 2013). The EFA resulted in the four constructs being expanded to five constructs, with employee empowerment being divided into two new constructs, namely employee empowerment (confidence in ability) and employee empowerment (autonomy in job). This resulted in hypothesis 2 being divided into two sub-hypotheses. Statistical techniques applied to test the hypotheses formulated for the study included multiple regression analysis and independent sample t-tests.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Profile of respondents

The majority of the respondents were in the age category of 41 to 50 years (43.9%), followed by those of 31 to 40 years (30.9%), 51 to 60 years (19.2%), and 60 years or older (6%). Females comprised 64.9% of the respondents and males 35.1%. The largest race group was white (33.3%), followed by coloured (23.2%), black (23.1%) and Indian/Asian (17.0%), while some respondents (3.4%) were not willing to disclose their race. In addition, 29% of the respondents had worked for the bank for 3 to 9 years, 24% for more than 18 years, 21% for 10 to 17 years, and 26% for less than 2 years.

Reliability

The coefficient alpha, or Cronbach's alpha, is the average of all people split-half coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items. Cronbach's alpha values vary in value from 0, meaning no consistency, to 1, meaning complete consistency. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.80 or higher are regarded as having high reliability and those from 0.70 to 0.79 as having good reliability; values from 0.60 to 0.69 are considered fair; and coefficients lower than 0.60 are questionable (Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau & Bush, 2010). The reliability of the research instrument for this study was determined utilising Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Lubbe, 2013). Cronbach's alpha is calculated as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

**TABLE 1: RELIABILITY
STATISTICS**

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha
Trust	0.904
Employee empowerment (confidence in ability)	0.806
Employee empowerment (autonomy in job)	0.702
Work conditions	0.806
Leadership	0.818
Employee satisfaction	0.750

Table 1 illustrates that the Cronbach's alpha scores for the different internal people constructs and employee job satisfaction varied between 0.702 and 0.904, indicating good reliability.

The influence of trust, employee empowerment (confidence in ability), employee empowerment (autonomy in job), work conditions and leadership on employee satisfaction

Multiple regression analysis was applied to discuss the relationship between the independent variables of trust, employee empowerment (confidence in ability), employee empowerment (autonomy in job), work conditions and leadership and the dependent variable of employee satisfaction. The results are reflected in Table 2.

**TABLE 2:
REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF INTERNAL PEOPLE ELEMENTS ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Sig. value (p-value)	Beta value	T value	Adjusted R-square value
Employee satisfaction	Trust	0.319	0.069	0.999	0.584
	Employee empowerment (confidence in ability)	0.029	0.162	2.207	
	Employee empowerment (autonomy in job)	0.679	0.024	0.415	
	Work conditions	0.000	0.449	7.627	
	Leadership	0.025	0.125	2.261	

Table 2 indicates that employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership style had a statistically significant positive influence on employee job satisfaction, while trust and employee empowerment (autonomy in job) did not have a statistically significant positive influence on employee job satisfaction. The researcher relied on a 95% level of confidence, so a p-value of less than or equal to 0.05 implied that it is highly unlikely that the results are due to chance alone according to the independent sample t-test. This implies that the null hypotheses are rejected and the alternative hypotheses are accepted. The relationship between employee empowerment (confidence in ability) and employee job satisfaction is significant at $p = 0.029$; the relationship between work conditions and employee job satisfaction is significant at $p = 0.000$; and the relationship between leadership and employee job satisfaction is significant at $p = 0.025$; but neither the relationship between trust and employee job satisfaction ($p = 0.319$) nor the relationship between employee empowerment (autonomy in job) and employee job satisfaction ($p = 0.679$) is statistically significant. In addition, Table 2 indicates that the multiple regression analysis explained 58.4% of the variance (R^2) in employee job satisfaction. In other words, it can be said that 58.4% of a possible variation in the level of employee job satisfaction in a selected bank is caused by employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership.

TABLE 3: HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis	Independent variable	Dependent variable	β	Sig.	Finding
H ₁	Trust	Employee job satisfaction	0.069	0.319	Rejected
H _{2a}	Employee empowerment (confidence in ability)		0.162	0.029	Accepted
H _{2b}	Employee empowerment (autonomy in job)		0.024	0.679	Rejected
H ₃	Work conditions		0.449	0.000	Accepted
H ₄	Leadership		0.125	0.025	Accepted

Table 3 reflects the outcome (acceptance or rejection) of the different hypotheses formulated for the study. Hypotheses H_{2a} , H_3 and H_4 are accepted, whilst hypotheses H_1 and H_{2b} are rejected.

DISCUSSION

From an industry perspective, the study contributes in potentially assisting the banking industry to recognise how trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership can nurture employee satisfaction. This outcome will be governed, however, by the extent to which employees of the bank perceive trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership as positive. As noted by Burin (2011), South African service businesses increasingly realise the importance of having an internal marketing programme to retain and motivate the best employees to deliver the best level of service. Therefore, the main objective of internal marketing is to motivate employees so that they can achieve service excellence (Mishra, 2010). The study suggests that a focused internal marketing approach will strengthen employee satisfaction through an understanding of the factors (such as trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership) required to strengthen employee happiness.

Theoretically, the study makes two contributions. Firstly, it establishes that employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership, as elements of the “internal people” component of internal marketing, do lead to positive employee satisfaction. The argument can therefore be proposed that only selected constructs, proposed by theory to influence employee satisfaction, do have a positive influence on the satisfaction of employees in the banking industry of an emerging market (as the study hypothesises). The findings from this study are significant as they demonstrate what constitutes a sound internal people strategy and how this influences employee satisfaction. Future researchers could use the different elements of “internal people” to study their influence on various domains, such as affective commitment or employee loyalty. Therefore, the study contributes to internal marketing literature through the proposition of useful measurement dimensions.

Secondly, the study provides an enhanced understanding of the influence on employee satisfaction of “internal people” constructs such as employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership from the perspective of an emerging African economy and a competitive industry such as the banking industry. The research study proposes a model that clarifies how employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership have a direct positive influence on employee satisfaction. Therefore, the positive influence of internal people elements (employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership) on employee satisfaction can provide a bank with a competitive advantage in retaining its employees and securing professional and sustained service delivery.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

When considering the results of the study, it can be said that the trust of employees in their organisation (e.g. a bank) plays a crucial role in their interaction with customers and their level of satisfaction while working for the organisation. Therefore, to secure employee satisfaction it is important for a bank to ensure that employees are of the opinion that the organisation has their best interests at heart. In addition, the primary focus of a bank should be not solely on generating profits but also on ensuring that employees who deliver the required service are well taken care of and are trusted to continue delivering the service in a professional manner, supportive of high service quality levels. When an organisational brand is trusted by its employees, such employees are empowered more successfully to convince the customer of what they are selling.

Secondly, only when employees can effectively take ownership of decision making can they provide a service that will keep the end user happy. It is therefore important for an organisation (such as a bank) to provide training for their employees and then to trust that this training has equipped them with all the necessary tools to provide exceptional service that enhances customer satisfaction. It is only when employees are respected for the job that they do and are acknowledged in their work environment that they feel confident and enabled to excel in what they have been tasked with. Through such an approach, the delivery time to end-user customers can also be improved.

Thirdly, it is no secret that additional benefits contribute to employee satisfaction. These include favourable remuneration, working hours (flexitime) and fringe benefits, the ambience of the work environment, and the comfort of employees' chairs and desks. When an organisation ensures that the employees are comfortable with their surroundings during their working hours, this can have a positive influence on their level of satisfaction. Acknowledgement of employee family achievements, the establishment of a baby centre for employees who are parents (e.g. a crèche on

the working premises), and the creation of more flexible working hours for mothers to be able to collect their children from school can also create a more favourable work environment.

Fourthly, the leadership style displayed by the leader is what motivates or demotivates employees. If employees feel that their leaders do not trust them, do not care about their work conditions, and do not have their best interests at heart, they will not enjoy working for that organisation and will become dissatisfied. However, when employees are of the opinion that their leaders view them as part of the team and trust them enough to handle their job on their own, their satisfaction increases.

CONCLUSIONS

The study intended to determine the influence of the internal marketing element “people” on employee satisfaction from a banking perspective in order to enhance their satisfaction at a selected bank. The study established that the “internal people” constructs of employee empowerment (confidence in ability), work conditions and leadership do have a positive and significant influence on the job satisfaction levels of employees. It should be noted, however, that a bank can improve and maintain employee satisfaction if it creates work conditions that successfully empower employees to develop greater belief in their own abilities, and if management displays a participative leadership style that supports employee empowerment and continuous employee development.

In terms of limitations, only four elements of “internal people”, namely trust, employee empowerment, work conditions and leadership, were researched in a single service setting. However, focused insights into these four elements of the “internal people” construct were delivered and its influence on employee job satisfaction within a banking services environment in South Africa discussed. An understanding of this can assist banks in emerging economies in enhancing employee job satisfaction, thereby reducing staff turnover and strengthening employee retention in the long term.

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The influence of green image, physical environment quality and green trust on green purchase intention

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ABSTRACT

The emerging natives of green purchasing and green supply chain management in South Africa are quite hostile and characterised by many players who scramble for market share, profitability and long-term survival. Organisations doing business under this initiative need to think of new business ideas to remain competitive. The study was done to analyse the influence of green image, physical environment quality, green trust and green purchase intention on various sectors of the economy. With research methodology having two main techniques, a quantitative research technique was used in this study. 332 questionnaires were collected from students and staff members of the One University of Technology (UoT). The hypotheses of the variables were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM). Thereafter, the results of the tests revealed positive and significant relationships between the predictor constructs (green image, physical environment quality and green trust) and the outcome variable (green purchase intention). Physical environment quality, green image and green trust were the most important constructs in influencing green purchasing intentions. The results of the study may be used as a measure in addressing the challenges that green purchasing indicatives incorporate.

Keywords: Green image, Physical environment quality, Green trust, Green purchase intention, Attitude Behaviour, Context Theory

Green image and green trust are the main drivers in implementing the strategies that could possibly adopt the key for both competitive advantage and also survival in the challenges and dynamic global physical environmental (Perotti, Zorzini, Cagno & Micheli, 2012). The implementation of green purchase intention strategies is subject to the organisational capabilities in which firms seek to distinguish its traditional practices that do not seek the necessary tools for recent supply chain effectiveness (Henry & Thompson, 2011). The proliferation of green trust on green purchase intention is centred on consumer behavioural attitudes towards the methodology of contextualising the importance of contemporary organisational practices (Cerchiello & De Giovanni, 2012). In order to make a nexus between green image and green trust coalitions, teams and integration need constant focus between consumers and suppliers (Mafini, Louri-Okoumba & Pooe, 2015).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nguyen and Leblanc (2010) highlighted that a huge void exists between the knowledge of green supply chain management and the successful implementation of environmental qualities strategies within South African higher learning institutions. Furthermore, the Supply Chain Foresight Report (2015) highlights that a mere 29 percent of the higher learning institutions in South Africa are optimising green purchase intention sustainability programs, while there are only 46 percent that are jointly working together. Even though some research has been carried out on the factors influencing physical environment performance, more research is needed to close the gap between physical

environmental quality, green image, green trust and green purchasing intention. Furthermore, new innovations and technological advancements erupting in this field remains a paucity which makes this study fill in that gap and be of paramount importance (Narver & Slater, 2012). Wong, Lai, Lun and Cheng (2012) review the aspect that to succeed in green innovation is more challenging than to succeed in traditional innovation. Investing in green innovation not only requires a good understanding of the market and statutory requirements but also environmental ethics and a paradigm, which is expanding and evolving and which is expected to exert growing influence on consumer buying behaviour.

Lee and Ball (2011) indicated that even though there has been various studies that have focused on green purchasing and green procurement performance, none of these studies gave attention to how green image and trust link in developing intra-firm supply chain practices with the inter-firm practices of supply chain green management, green sustainability and environmental performance. Although, Viehland (2012) focused on intra-firm green purchasing intention, which gave room to focus on green perceived risks rather than green trust performance through the organisational practices of supply chain physical environmental chronologies, strategic green image and supply chain capabilities. The absence of such a link between intra-firm green procurement practice and green purchase intentions through the inter-firm practices of green perceived risks, physical environment and eco-friendly competence makes this study significant in filling such a research gap (Marcus & Fremeth, 2010). With a vast of studies conducted in this field of expertise it is difficult to acquire research that examined the influence of physical environment quality and green image as predictors, green trust as the mediator and green purchase intention as the outcome variable. This study seeks to focus on a gamut of green initiatives in one UoT where evidence shows that minimal or no research has been carried out on this subject.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective is to investigate the impact of green image, physical environment quality and green trust on green purchase intention. The empirical objectives are:

- To examine the relationship between green image and green trust
- To investigate the relationship between physical environment quality and green trust
- To explore the relationship between green trust and green purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitude behaviour Context Theory

The study has managed to employ the attitude–behavior–context (ABC) theory with the main aim of understanding the effect of green image and trust on green purchase intention. The attitude behaviour context theory ABC theory ascertains that some attitudes posits different types of factors underlying the desire to act with pro-environmental intent and that they can influence the occurrence of pro-environmental behaviour (Stern, 2000). Additionally, The ABC theory drives its attention on a specific set of perceived contextual factors which are most dominant and directly influence the attitudes to influence environmental behaviour (Guagnano, Stern & Dietz, 1995; Stern, 2000). According to ABC theory, personal behavior is based on goodwill, the more or less time-consuming, expensive, or difficult the behavior is perceived to be, the stronger it becomes on attitudinal factors, such as attitudes (Guagnano et al., 1995; Stern, 2000; Stern, 1999). For the purpose of this study physical environmental quality, green image, trust and the intent to purchase are the factors that interact with attitudes related to environmental behaviour.

Green Image

Eggert and Ulaga (2010) outlines the emergence of green image on purchase decisions, defines a close relationship onto organisational alignment with customers' perceptions and a link with bad corporate image. Furthermore, Padgett and Allen (2011) also argue that green image is associated with defining the image as a set of perceptions about an organisation reflected by the organisational association of the consumers. This brings about a concept of reflective

mechanism in which the capabilities of corporates to construct a distinctive image in green offerings will be termed by a more detailed attention on positive operational constructs (Panayides & Lun, 2009). This signifies the role of supporting functions in the organisation that correlate with image in order to detail entail positive ratings from corporate bodies that measure the level of success in that field.

Chang, Ouzrout, Nongaillard, Bouras and Jiliu (2014) highlighted that when organisational structures are correctly aligned to green practises the innovative processes which are green confer cost advantage on a firm over its competitors, which results in innovative products which are also green to enhance firm profitability as products marketed under the green and innovative concept may bring in new customers and fresh revenue. This idea brings in the marketing department to strategically link strategic development components in line with the constant change in technological advancements that bring about the green image of the company. The importance of this variable to the study of green purchasing plays a pivotal role when aligning corporate structures in an organisation nowadays. This is evident enough that with green image the success of other critical concepts including the other variable of physical environmental quality can be integrated using different models of scholars and knowledge which entirely save the ultimate purpose of a positive construct in organisational recognition.

Another important factor to the study of green image is the issue of service quality. This posits a positive relationship on organisational image with the demand for customers that require distinctive customer service which includes green product offerings. Lee, Park and Han (2011) found that social influence, environmental concern, self-image, and perceived environmental responsibility determined green purchase behaviour from a point of interaction between the retailer and also the third party involved.

Green image is a variable that does not stand on its own as it carries several other factors that influence its existence. The antecedents of green image include personal norms, social norms and peer influence. Customers' perceptions and evaluations about their personal needs directly play a role in their buying patterns, resulting in consumers buying products that align to their identity, social status, and values (Belk 2009). This reflects the individual social norms that individuals take into consideration when conducting green purchase intentions from a participative point of correlation. Burris and Rempel (2010) posit that their characteristics are aligned as an addition of one's self and customers to participate in different roles of their societies. This gives the social norm greater chances of real time participation to gather more options to enrich the image of green performing entities.

A combination of the individual norm and self-identity can subject a positive relationship which in turn can motivate the factors that determine success in green image and buying behaviour patterns. Several authors (Daugherty, Richey, Roath, Min, Chen, Arndt & Genchev, 2006) highlight that relationship between socio-demographic variables and green buying was relatively complex and difficult to segment customers according to these constructs. Furthermore, an account on how peer influence as a factor that influences green image plays a vital role in contributing to other relevant stakeholders that need support mechanisms for the overall success of product development and green buying intentions.

Physical Environment Quality

According to Perotti, Zorzini, Cagno and Micheli (2012) physical environment quality is a variable which represents used environmental cooperation along with other green supply chain management (GSCM) initiatives used to examine how the adoption of green supply chain (GSC) practices by third-party logistics (3PLs). In modern day operations the need for green supply chain initiatives to work with third party logistics is key to increase the levels of awareness which are brought about by the external providers who eliminate wastages in the eco-friendly societies. Eltayeb, Zailani and Ramayah (2011) highlighted that adherence of green experience emanates from consumption, in which this may be an indicator of customers' demand for green, environmental regulations and society's expectation of sustainable development.

Marcus and Fremeth (2009) emphasized that the multidimensional nature of green management relates to good

practice. This signifies a detailed argument in which corporates which have not invested more on their environmental attributes need to attend to the manner so that numerous improvements regarding the quality of their environment can be positive in manner (Oreg & Kartz-Gerro, 2016; Han, Eom, Chung, Lee, Ryu & Kim, 2019)

Lee and Ball (2011) ascertained that the main drivers to the management of firm interaction with, and impact upon, the natural environment. Hart (2015) argued that green management relates far much more than regulatory compliance and there is need to incorporate innovative methods such as waste prevention, product adherence and corporate social responsibility. This signifies the attentive nature of how the structure of the organisation would be able to position the nature of its operations according to the required and favourable operational basis of market success. Huang and Wu (2010) highlighted that green products are designed and commercialized according to the regulations mainly centred at reducing sources of pollution and minimizing risks to human health and the environment at large. This entails that green offering, lean and practises and regulatory measures are closely monitored to instil a smooth transitional interchange.

Another important aspect of the physical environment in relation to this study is integration of the different functions that constitutes of an improved eco-friendly society. Jain, Khalil, Johnston and Cheng (2014) highlighted that typical green characteristics are channelled on several green customer guides revolving around recyclability, recycled content, fuel efficiency, toxic emission related performance, and others such as efficient marshalling and disposals (Han et al, 2019). This gives more room to highlight mass inclusivity in terms of a more content and robust of aligning the organisation to the relevant quality in which consortiums can firmly agree on.

Sawers, Pretorius and Oerlemans (2008) found that physical environmental quality consists of several important aspects to the study. Hadenet and Siegel (2009) highlighted that environmental quality recalibrates organisational capabilities by being able to conduct green switching intent on the environment which gives the society more room for liason. Physical environmental quality signifies the position of organisational performance to a larger extent. Li and Calantone (2011) indicated that top-level management support can directly influence the effectiveness of quality environmental management systems through human capital operations, such as performance bonuses or rewards, training, and increased support networks. Additionally, the initiatives provided by top-level management is regarded as an important factor for further developments and implementation mechanisms of proactive environmental strategies (Peng & Lin, 2008; Nath, Nachiappan & Ramanathan, 2010; Zhu, Geng & Lai, 2010). This gives in the influence of a more comprehensive approach to link all the possible construct to environmental strategies.

This direction has arisen from Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson (2010) confirm that robust approaches to physical environmental quality might be a factor that has contributed to competitive advantage in several ways such as product innovation and process development. This gives this variable numerous viability in which product performance can be used to link both factors and strategies that need attention to enlighten better ways in which the environment can attract green switching intentions (Aragon-Correa and Rubio-Lopez, 2007; Lai, Wong & Cheng, 2010; Han et al, 2019).

The factors that may affect physical environmental quality include public expectation, environmental performance and environmental information. Several authors (Mitchell, 2010; Schiesel, 2011) indicates that there is integration of the two factors in terms of how well the concepts of environmental quality can be aligned with the physical internal factors that affect organisations.

Burris and Rempel (2009:193) highlighted that more room for environmental information play a more comprehensive metrics in solving the crisis of a better environment works at minimising the social risk of increased health hazards. Cerchiello and De Giovanni, (2012) tend to produce more environmental information to organisations that are working on constructing the machinery and equipment that could be in the capacity to provide the necessary conditions for green purchase offerings.

Green Trust

Trust is a major component of how retailers, suppliers and consumers perceive the end result of buying behaviours. Hadenet and Siegel (2009:187) outlined that "green trust" as "a willingness to depend on a product, service, or brand based on the belief or expectation resulting from its credibility, benevolence, and ability about its environmental performance". Additionally, numerous scholars including Henry and Thompson (2011) indicated that over the years, customer trust is a dimension of consumer purchase intentions. This gives an account of the nature of a strong and

meaningful relationship between customers and retailers on how they fundamentally attend to trust and green offering in business organisations.

Scaglione, Schegg and Murphy (2009) defined green trust as a willingness to depend on a product, service, or brand based on the belief or expectation resulting from its credibility, benevolence and ability about its environmental performance. This entails that when an organisation positions itself according to expectations of customers' there is always room for trust and loyalty resulting from quality services and experience. Kalafatiset (2012) highlighted that there is need for holistic tools in which organisations can adopt and continuously develop to further put green purchasing trust in the minds of consumers.

Customers focus mainly on the characteristics of the product as a measure to differentiate themselves from the other inferior service providers who do incorporate trust as one of their major variable in determining a positive service level to its customers (Wong et al, 2012). Vorhies and Morgan (2015) indicated that inducing the processes of pro-social environment status on customers' trust and ability to acquire green products which in turn highlights pro-social status perceptions and how they could affect customers' ability to participate or purchase green products. This defines a more distinctive feature of how trust and organisational buying tallies through the social contract of retail buying.

Product development together with the enhancement of green trust brings in a robust engagement on social processes involving individuals from different backgrounds and top management positions (Wong et al, 2012). This entails those provisions of the green offering which are in line with product manifestation correlates directly to loyalty in terms of how well the product is being managed to attract its customer base. Vorhies and Morgan (2015) highlighted that pressure on suppliers to entail more sustained green product offering might be a factor which may in turn be of positive measure to their customers.

Trust and loyalty continues to play a pivotal role in ascertaining the importance of green purchasing in the modern day technology. Li and Calantone (2011) highlighted that the research and development has components such as product trust which links with the research and development strength that can play a pivotal role and influence future product performance therefore; the study will propose a positive hypothesis between current and future product alignments. This helps potential shortcomings to be eliminated using research and development mechanisms that are specifically meant for green purchase intentions and offerings. In the next section the constructs or measurements that affect this variable will be discussed taking into account both its tools and antecedents.

Green trust has other several important aspects that it brings to the study of green purchase intentions which organisations need to take into account. Hart (2015:28) found that the most relevant justification consumers present for not engaging in eco-responsible consumption is the "economic rationalisation" argument, which the authors synthesised in the statements "it is all about costs and benefits, and socially responsible consumption is costly" and the costs of socially responsible consumption are greater than its benefits. This explains the need for a green initiative for consumers to be able to link a justifiable trust in their quantitative costs and benefits arises from a more cognitive approach which both the social and economic contract resolve in green purchasing.

Green trust is multi-dimensional variable because of its nature of having several other components that are used to measure that particular variable. Additionally, these components used to measure green trust include brand image, green satisfaction and brand equity. Scaglione et al, (2009) highlighted that brand equity as activities directly influenced organisational reputation and also led to consumer trust in a company. Furthermore, trust mediated the relationship between trust and corporate reputation and between green trust and brand equity.

Green Purchase intention

Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson (2010) outlined that green purchase intention constitutes of certain characteristics that are related to the perception of a product's value, so it generates a positive word-of-mouth effect and raise purchase intentions. This describes the different components in which an organisation can align itself for the benefit of evaluating the principles that can be used to solve the word of mouth effect. Spanos and Lioukas (2011:229) indicated that cross-functional teams in green purchase intention can be defined as the magnitude of interaction and communication, the level of information sharing, the degree of coordination, and the extent of joint involvement across functions in specific new product task". This signifies a transit and temporal measure the organisation can absorb to limit future risks and bottlenecks.

Mitchell (2010) described green purchasing intention as a risk component that is aimed at minimising perceived risk rather than to maximize their expected output. This entails the desire that buyers interact with a retailer to attain a certain product or service taking into account the use of a projected eco-friendly dynamic. Several authors (Schlosser, White and Lloyd, 2006; Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2006; Woo & Kim, 2019) highlighted that green purchase intention correlates with perceived value which is subjected to customers' evaluation of the expected outcome of a product or service based on consumers' adherence. This gives an account of how well fundamentals relating to the degree of gross settlement can be aligned with the generation of service quality and positive acquisition mechanisms.

Green purchase intentions are more important for companies under the context of strict international environmental regulations and prevalent customer environment. Mathhes and Wonneberger (2007) also found that green consumers were not sceptical of green advertising; in fact, they found that green consumers saw more informational utility in green ads than did non-green ads. This entails the provision of promotional capabilities that can be incorporated by the firm to gather the desire to purchase a product with intention of having a two way relationship.

Zutshi and Sohal (2009) highlighted that the abilities of green initiatives often requires cooperation amongst environmental quality personnel, supervisors, and production personnel therefore giving room for continuous evaluation, monitoring and improvements on the subjected line of operation. Hadenet and Siegel (2009) highlighted that customers reflect favourably to products when they view the brands as having similar components as they have, therefore it has been argued that green purchase intention customers will perceive green companies as having similar ideals as they have and will respond favourably to these firms and organisations.

This entails a more cognitive approach in terms of the critical concepts which redirects consumers to attain the perceived green offering. The behavioural nature of green initiatives can be calibrated by the essence of collaborative working tools including the lean and just in time approaches which organisations make use of to combat occurrence in purchasing and procurement mechanisms initiatives (Mitchell, 2010; Anastasiei & Dospinescu, 2019). An initiative of green purchase intention which environmental friendly mechanisms are put into practice results in the variable to be best equipped with proactive green purchase initiatives (Anastasiei & Dospinescu, 2019).

CONCEPTUALISED FRAMEWORK

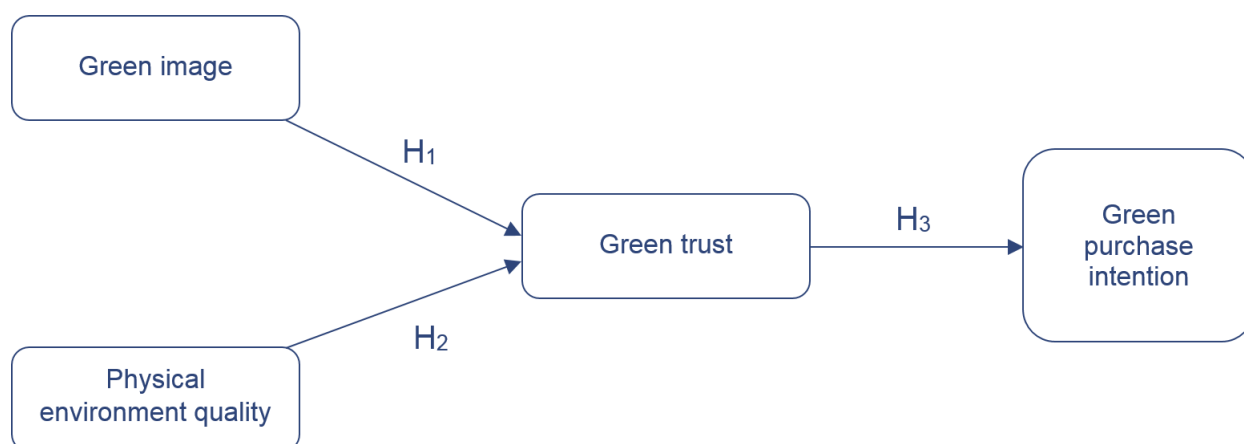
Drawing from the literature reviewed, the research model in Figure 1 has been developed. The conceptual model is a representation of the constructs and their relationships with one another.

H₁: Green image exerts a positive influence on green trust

H₂: Physical environment quality exerts a positive influence on green trust

H₃: Green trust exerts a positive influence on green purchase intention

**FIGURE 1:
PROPOSED RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper has utilised a Five-point-Likert scale to collect data from the respondents. The questions for this study were developed from previous literature; these questions were adapted for this study, therefore it was possible to obtain adequate information. The target population was the staff members and students of one UoT. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design as it studies are generally quick, easy, and cheap to perform. In this study, the quantitative approach was adopted because a quantitative research is more objective and scientific, which provides more valid and reliable results (Crowther & Lancaster, 2009). In addition, quantitative research is easier to conduct, since the data can be collected with ease and can be collated using tables and figures. For these reasons, the quantitative method was selected. In this study the sample size was set at n=332 respondents. A convenience sampling technique was applied in this study to collect data from respondents. The convenience sampling technique was chosen because it was quick and cheap, also because respondents were conveniently available (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Plano Clark & Van Der Westhuizen, 2012).

Descriptive statistics results

Descriptive statistics in Table 1 show the gender, age, marital status, race and languages for the respondents. The table depicts that more females (77.1%) participated in the study than males (22.9%). More females took part in the study than males and this might be because women are green conscious than males (Mitchell, 2010). This study also highlighted that there were more single respondents than married (9.6% were married and 81.3% single). The modal age group of respondents was between 26 and 36 years, constituting 46.7% of the sample. 272 people from the sample are black, and this number represents 81.93% of the sample which is the largest race in this study. 2 of them are Indian and they represent 0.6% of the sample frame. 124 people from the sample speak English, and this number represents 37.35% of the sample, which is the largest proportion of the respondents. There is another group referred to as other reflected by 50 people and a staggering 15.1%. The smallest group was Afrikaans speaking people represented by 20 people, and a percentage of 6%. The last group is of the Zulu speaking people who constitutes of 38 people reflecting 11.45% of the sample. Ethical considerations of the respondents were taken into consideration like privacy and confidentiality and permission from the university was granted to collect data.

**TABLE 1:
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	76	22.9
	Female	256	77.1
	Total	332	100%
Marital status	Married	32	9.6
	Single	270	81.3
	Widowed	2	6
	Engaged	28	8.4
	Total	332	100%
Age	25-less	134	40.4
	26-36	155	46.7
	37-47	41	12.3
	48-58	2	0.6
	Total	332	100%
Race	Black	272	81.9
	Indian	2	0.6
	White	53	16.0
	Coloured	5	1.5
	Total	332	100%
Language	English	124	37.3
	Sotho	69	20.8
	Xhosa	31	9.3
	Other	50	15.1
	Afrikaans	20	6.0
	Zulu	38	11.4
	Total	332	100%

TESTS OF MEASURES AND ACCURACY ANALYSIS STATISTICS

The software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 25.0 were used to perform the data analysis. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the measuring scales were assessed to ensure valid data analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out to examine the reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the multi-item construct measures. All the factor loadings are above the 0.5 threshold, which indicates a good validity of the measurement instruments used. Overall acceptable CFA model fit

indices used in this study included: the (df) (Chi-Square/Degree of Freedom) value equal to or less than 3.00, the CFI (Comparative Fit Index) value equal to or higher than 0.90, Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI) value equal to or higher than 0.90, the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) value equal to or higher than 0.90, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value equal to or less than 0.08. Furthermore, recommended statistics for final overall model assessment indicated a favourable fit of the measurement model to the data, that is: (df) = 1,237, CFI = 0,950, TLI = 0,909, IFI = 0,965 and RMSEA = 0,029.

Furthermore, SEM was performed to test the causal relationships between variables simultaneously. Furthermore, SEM was designed to test causal relationships between and among latent constructs. The main advantage of SEM is that SEM assesses the whole structural model causal relationships simultaneously whereas, Regression Analysis uses a Partial approach to assessing causal relationships. SEM with AMOS indicators are used to evaluate the model fit to the data collected using indicators such as GFI, AGFI, CFI, IFI, TLI and RMSEA which other methods cannot provide. In addition to that, SEM with AMOS uses the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to provide indicators that evaluate the measurement instruments, reliability and validity.

Convergent validity is a technique to assess construct validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In the current study, convergent validity was determined through item to total correlation and factor loading. Item to total correlation and factor loading were assessed using SPSS. For consistency to assess the items, factor loading should be greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As seen in the Table 2, the factor loading of the all the measurement instruments are within the range of 0.528 to 0.750. All the items are greater than 0.5. These results mean that all the items are acceptable and that there is a relationship between each construct and each item.

TABLE 2:
ACCURACY ANALYSIS STATISTICS

	Research Construct	Cronbach's Test		Composite Reliability Value	Average Variance Extracted Value	Factor loading
		Item-total	α value			
Green image (GI)	GI 1	0.697	0.711	0.711	0.535	0.651
	GI 2	0.685				0.594
	GI 3	0.656				0.571
	GI 4	0.506				0.694
	GI 5	0.787				0.528
Physical environment (PE)	PE 1	0.770	0.798	0.798	0.563	0.535
	PE 2	0.710				0.579
	PE 3	0.736				0.664
	PE 4	0.660				0.714
	PE 5	0.736				0.670
Green trust (GT)	GT 1	0.500	0.633	0.633	0.500	0.560
	GT 2	0.528				0.591
	GT 3	0.539				0.634
	GT 4	0.554				0.682
	GT 5	0.506				0.615
Green purchase intention (GP)	GP 1	0.547	0.645	0.645	0.507	0.625
	GP 2	0.590				0.650
	GP 3	0.623				0.750
	GP 4	0.530				0.716
	GP 5	0.661				0.665

Note: Scores: 1 – Strongly Disagree; 3 – Neutral; 5 – Strongly Agree;

Measurement CFA model fits: $\chi^2/(\text{df}) = 1,237$, CFI = 0,950, TLI = 0,909, IFI = 0,965 and RMSEA = 0,029

To evaluate the internal consistency of the research constructs, composite reliability was conducted in this study. The following formula was used to calculate composite reliability.

$$(CR): CR\eta = (\sum \lambda_{yi})^2 / [(\sum \lambda_{yi})^2 + (\sum \varepsilon_i)]$$

$$CR = (\text{square of the summation of the factor loadings}) / [(\text{square of the summation of the factor loadings}) + (\text{summation of error variances})]$$

According to Hair, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2010) a composite reliability greater than 0.6 reflects to a good consistency of the variable. As shown in the Table 2, all the four constructs in this study were having a composite reliability between 0.633 and 0.798 (more than 0.6). Therefore, these results prove the existence of a good internal reliability of the constructs in this study.

According to Hair et al, (2010) the average variance extracted of the research constructs should be greater than 0.5. The AVE was calculated by using the following formula of Fornell and Lacker (1981:64):

$$V\eta = \sum \lambda_{yi}^2 / (\sum \lambda_{yi}^2 + \sum \varepsilon_i)$$

$$AVE = \text{summation of the square of factor loadings} / [(\text{summation of the square of factor loadings}) + (\text{summation of error variances})]$$

The values of AVE of the research constructs are between 0.500 and 0.563 (as presented in Table 2), these values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). Therefore, these results are acceptable.

In the current study, the Table 3 shows a positive significant correlation between the different constructs. The correlation between PE and GI has a value of ($r=0.305$; $p<0.01$). Moreover, the correlation matrix describes a positive relationship between GT and GI with a value of ($r=0.443$; $p<0.01$) as well GT and PE with a value of ($r=0.491$; $p<0.01$). Furthermore, the same type of correlation exists between GP and GI ($r=0.410$; $p<0.01$); GP and PE ($r=0.338$; $p<0.01$) as well as GP and GT ($r=0.488$; $p<0.01$).

**TABLE 3:
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONSTRUCTS**

Research Construct	Construct correlation			
	GI	PE	GT	GP
Green Image (GI)	1.000			
Physical Environmental Quality (PE)	0.305**	1.000		
Green Trust (GT)	0.443**	0.491**	1.000	
Green Purchase Intention (GP)	0.410***	0.338**	0.488**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**TABLE 4:
RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING (PATH MODELING)**

Proposed hypothesis relationship	Hypothesis	Path coefficient estimates	Decision
Green Image → Green Trust	H1	0.702***	Accepted
Physical Environmental Quality → Green Trust	H2	0.534***	Accepted
Green Trust → Green Purchase Intention	H3	0.632***	Accepted

As presented in Table 4, the levels of the coefficients of all the three hypotheses are significant at a level of $p < 0.01$. All the hypotheses present three stars (***). According to Chinomona, Lin, Wang and Cheng (2010) significant level of $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.01$ are indicators of positive, strong and significant relationships between the research constructs. Based on that, it can be concluded that the hypotheses in this study are significant and acceptable.

RESULTS DISCUSSION

The main objective of this paper was to examine the influence of green image and physical environment quality on green trust and green purchase intention. The first hypothesis stated that green image has a positive influence on green trust for the staff members and students at UoT. This hypothesis was therefore supported in this study. It can be observed that in Table 4 that green image exerted a positive influence ($r = 0.702$) and was statistically significant. This result implies that green image directly influence green trust in a positive and significant way. The higher the level of green image, the higher the level of green trust. Studies done also proves that the more the green image the more the green trust (Zhou, Pan, Chen & Yang, 2013; Fernando, Jabbour & Wah, 2019; Gazzola, Del Campo & Onyango, 2019). Economic, political and social pressure are not the only reason for green trust, other motivation may include corporate responsibility, a desire to maintain brand reputation and competitive pressure (Coyle, Novack & Gibson, 2017). For companies to be competitive globally they should embrace the greening policy and procedures.

Hypothesis two suggested that physical environment quality has a positive influence on green trust of students and staff members on UoT. The hypothesis was supported in this study. Table 4, indicates that physical environment quality exerted a positive influence ($r = 0.534$) on green trust. The results indicates that physical environment quality is positively and significantly related to green trust. Therefore higher levels of physical environment quality will lead to greater levels of green trust. Therefore, physical environment quality aid organisations competitive sustainability and also the ability to respond to the global market conditions thereby leading in green trust (Mena, Hult, Ferrel & Zhang, 2019).

The third hypothesis, which advanced that green trust exerts a positive influence on green purchase intention was strong and accepted in this study. Table 4 shows that H_3 green trust exerts a positive ($r = 0.632$) influence on green purchase intention. This result suggests that green trust has a direct positive effect on green purchase intention. Therefore, the more effective the green trust, the greater the positive green purchase intention. Therefore, organisations aiming to enhance green trust and green purchase intention should consider supplier integration based on sustainable environmental performance which may increase organisation's efficiency and effectiveness (Bals & Turkulainen, 2017; Huo, Gu & Wang, 2019). The impact and benefits of green purchasing may include but not limited to technological advancement, environmental and economic performance and increased organisation competitive advantage (Yook, Choi & Suresh, 2018).

Green image with green trust ($r = 0.702$) emerged as the highest scoring hypothesis amongst the three hypotheses. This result could be attributed to the fact that most companies that are singled out as going green depend on the green production of the products and the green trust of consumers. Studies done also proves that the more the green image the more the green trust of the consumers (Zhou, Pan, Chen & Yang, 2013; Fernando, Jabbour & Wah, 2019; Gazzola, Del Campo & Onyango, 2019).

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper presents research that has results which are aligned to the previously research methodologies that were carried out in the field of SCM. However, despite these positive results, outcomes relating to how customers perceive physical environmental quality through trust and utilisation on the few related scarce resources has not been fairly investigated, particularly in the supply chain related industries. The results of the study were constrained to four variables, which restricted the inclusion of other variables such as green perceived risk and green perceived value that has been excluded from this study.

The overall conclusion of the study is that green image, physical environmental quality and green trust between consumers and suppliers in the UoT exert a positive influence on green purchase intention. The executive management and respective councils in the sector may use the results of this study as a tool in addressing key green purchase

intentions related challenges. When green purchase intention related challenges emerge, it may be key for executive managers to check if the cause of the problem does not emanate from the three variables used in this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS

Policy makers are generally responsible for creating a conducive environment for the success of Institutions. Good policies and strategies drive organisations to success while poorly formulated policies and strategies spell doom and failure for the organisations. As mentioned before, the findings show that the majority of Colleges are either micro or small. Therefore, poorly formulated policies and strategies lead to small institutions making an insignificant contribution to the national economy. The South African government and other governments, globally, are concerned with improving the growth and sustainability of SMEs.

CONCLUSION

The importance of this study is to involve several aspects, which are key to customer satisfaction in the modern world whereby firms incorporate green concepts to manufacture and deliver their products to different customers. The steps mentioned in this study may incorporate activities surrounding areas such as developing firm-wide learning about green innovation and physical environmental quality management figures and regulations, manifesting into green opportunities. Additionally, green product features and developing up new capabilities is a major concern mainly by aligning both new and existing capabilities with continuous innovation.

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Examining contributions of customer-based and employee-based brand equity to a retail bank's market performance using resource-based theory

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ABSTRACT

Both employees and brands are companies' most important assets, yet most studies focus on the equity generated from brands and not employees. The market performance of a brand, especially in the service sector, depends on two factors: (i) customer-based brand equity, or the differential effect of brand knowledge on a consumer's response to the marketing of the brand and (ii) employee-based brand equity, or how knowledgeable, competent and committed employees are in delivering on a brand's promises. Despite this, the contribution of the employee-based brand equity to market performance is rarely measured. Thus, guided by the resource-based theory, this study examined the contributions of both employee-based brand equity (EBBE) and customer-based brand equity (CBBE) to a retail bank's market performance. Drawn from six Nigerian provinces, 182 employees and 178 customers of the United Bank of Africa (UBA) were surveyed. Structural equation modelling results revealed that UBA's CBBE significantly affected customers' brand preference, repurchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price. UBA's EBBE also made a contribution, not only by impacting customers' willingness to pay a premium price, but also by improving the variance explained of the dependent constructs.

Keywords: Customer-based brand equity; employee-based brand equity; repurchase intention; price premium; retail bank; service; brand preference

In most companies' annual reports, the values of brands and employees are stated as the most important assets (Vomberg, Homburg & Bournemann, 2015). The value of a brand expressed in customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and the value of employees reflected in employee-based brand equity (EBBE) can drive market performance (Keller, 2013; Kwon, 2013). Market performance can be financial, in terms of sales volume, profits and market share (Beukes & Wyk, 2016), or it can be non-financial, in terms of consumers' positive responses to a brand. Consumers' responses can take the form of willingness to pay a premium price or spread positive word-of-mouth messages, brand preference, repurchase intention and positive attitudes towards brand extension (Buil, Martinez & De Chernatony, 2013). Based on the notion that the value or power of a brand lies in what customers know and feel about the brand, most studies to date have focused on the contribution of CBBE to market performance. For example, the study of Buil et al. (2013) assessed the contribution of CBBE to non-market performance in terms of consumers' responses to tangible product brands. The study did not, however, examine the contribution of EBBE.

The resource-based theory posits that all important resources that drive a firm's competitive advantage and ultimate market performance should be recognised and their contributions measured (Barney, 2018; Vomberg et al., 2015). Resource-based theorists such as Barney (1995; 2018) and Vomberg et al. (2015) have also stressed the importance

of measuring the contributions of all vital resources, namely, employees and brands, to the market performance of firms in different industry contexts. From a service firm perspective, for example, assessing the contributions of both employees through EBBE and brands through CBBE is particularly important. This is because customers' positive responses to a service brand and future patronage do not solely depend on CBBE but also on how knowledgeable, competent and committed the employees are in interactively and individually delivering on a brand's promises (i.e. EBBE) (Vomberg et al., 2015).

In a retail service setting, Grewal, Roggeveen and Nordfält (2017) report that an engaged and loyal customer base is built when the contributions of all stakeholders, especially the employees, are recognised and appreciated. Moreover, King and Grace (2010) contend that knowledgeable, appreciated and satisfied employees are sources of EBBE. From EBBE, benefits like good brand citizenship behaviour, brand commitment, employee and customer retention can be enjoyed. Despite the non-financial market performance benefits awaiting firms from both CBBE and EBBE, only the contribution of CBBE has been measured while the contribution of EBBE has rarely been assessed (Vomberg et al., 2015). Thus, this study examines the contributions of both CBBE and EBBE to the non-financial market performance of a retail service firm - United Bank of Africa (UBA) PLC in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the extent to which the CBBE of the UBA brand impacts on its non-financial market performance in terms of customers' willingness to pay a premium price, brand preference and repurchase intention (model 1).
- To assess how much both the CBBE and EBBE of the UBA brand impact on its non-financial market performance in terms of customers' willingness to pay a premium price, brand preference and repurchase intention (model 2).
- To examine the difference in variance explained of UBA customers' willingness to pay a premium price, brand preference and repurchase intention from model 1 and model 2.

The purpose of selecting UBA in Nigeria and conducting this study are explained next.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

UBA is one of Nigeria's top five banks and operates in 22 African countries, including Southern African countries such as Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and South Africa. UBA also operates in the United States, the United Kingdom and France. It has about 626 global branches and serves more than seven million customers, most of whom are retail national and global customers (Research & Market, 2015). Despite the volatile Nigerian economy, partly caused by low oil prices and a very competitive retail banking sector, UBA's March 2018 financial report showed that the bank's 2017 gross earnings increased by 20.3%. Its profits before tax in 2017 also grew by 16%. Compared to 2016, the bank's total asset grew by 16.1% by the end of 2017 (United Bank for Africa Plc, 2018). While the measurement of UBA's asset worth is important because it reveals information about the bank's financial performance, it is equally important to assess the degree to which the bank's intangible assets, in the form of CBBE (Keller, 2013) and EBBE (Kwon, 2013), are driving some of its key non-financial market performance outcomes. These outcomes can be customers' brand preference, willingness to pay a premium price and repurchase intention (Buil et al., 2013).

Attempts have been made to measure retail brand equity (see for e.g. Anselmsson, Burt & Tunca, 2017; Londoño, Elms & Davies, 2016), although no studies have been specifically conducted on retail service brands such as banks. With the exception of Swoboda, Weindel and Hälsig (2016), who examined the impact of retail brand equity on customers' intentional loyalty to retailers, studies have not empirically assessed the anticipated market performance outcomes of retail brand equity. The present study contributes by not only examining two types of brand equity in the retail service sector, but by also assessing the extent to which the two types (i.e. CBBE and EBBE) drive non-financial market performance in terms of customers' responses to a retail service brand. The study starts by describing CBBE and EBBE and their benefits, after which the hypotheses and conceptual model are developed from the literature reviewed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various Perspectives of Brand Equity and its Benefits

Brand equity is an important intangible asset (Chowudhury, 2012) and has been conceptualised in three main perspectives (Buil et al., 2013), as described in the next sub-section.

Describing the three perspectives of brand equity

Viewing brand equity from a financial-based brand equity (FBBE) perspective, Farquhar, Han and Ijiri (1991) describe FBBE as the added value endowed by the brand name or the monetary value a firm generates from building and owning a brand. The knowledge of FBBE enables the reporting of the dollar value of a brand asset in financial statements and the calculation of an objective value of a brand during the sale or acquisition of a company (Farquhar, Han & Ijiri, 1991). From a consumer-based perspective (i.e. CBBE), Keller (2013:69) defines brand equity as “the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of a brand”. Conceptualising brand equity from an employee-based perspective (i.e. EBBE), Tavassoli, Sorescu and Rajesh (2014, p. 677) view it as “the value that a brand provides to a firm through its effects on the attitudes and behaviours of its employees”. The attainment of FBBE depends on how strong both EBBE and CBBE are (Kwon, 2013). Their strength can be evaluated from the following benefits they provide.

Benefits or outcomes of CBBE and EBBE

A number of benefits flow from a strong brand with positive EBBE and CBBE. Firms invest and develop strategies to increase their CBBE because, among its many benefits, it improves perceptions of product quality and performance, increases customer loyalty, reduces vulnerability to competitive marketing actions, increases profit margins, creates opportunities for brand extensions and facilitates trade cooperation. CBBE most importantly drives consumers' positive responses to the marketing of brands (Keller, 2013).

Buil et al. (2013) studied the impact of CBBE on non-financial market performance in terms of four consumer responses – (i) willingness to pay a premium price, (ii) brand preference, (iii) repurchase intentions and (iv) positive attitudes towards brand extensions. They tested the impact with a tangible product brand and found that CBBE positively affects all four non-financial market performances. For a financial service brand, Wang, Yu and Ye (2012) found that a banking firm's brand equity positively drives its market value. In a retail setting, customer-based retail brand equity (CBRBE) can act as a 'shortcut' to position retail brands in the minds of consumers. This positioning facilitates easy recall of the most satisfying experiences and can thus influence future patronage of the retailer. CBRBE can also minimise the possibility of retail customers switching to a competitor's brand (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

In addition to the contribution of CBBE to the market performance of brands in the tangible product and service sectors, performance can also be enhanced by EBBE. King and Grace (2010:944) define EBBE as “the differential effect that ... brand knowledge has on employees' response to their work environment”. They contend that EBBE benefits a firm in terms of good brand citizenship behaviour, employee satisfaction, employees' intention to stay in an organisation and employees' willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth about their company and brands. These EBBE benefits, generated by good internal marketing practices (e.g. role clarity, knowledge generation and dissemination) can enhance a firm's performance in the market (King & Grace, 2010). Huang, Rundle-Thiele and Chen (2019) also suggest that EBBE is generated from good internal marketing practices (e.g. training and internal communication) and leads to employee satisfaction, which can in turn enhance a firm's competitive advantage in the market.

When employees are well-informed about the value of their company brand and are proud of its image, this drives EBBE (King & Grace, 2010) and can even result in the willingness of employees and executives to accept lower pay (Tavassoli et al., 2014). In addition to the cost savings that can be made from employees' willingness to accept lower pay, proud employees will gladly deliver on a brand's promises (Kwon, 2013). Morokane, Chiba and Kleyn (2016)

found that for a large retail bank in South Africa, employees' knowledge and engagement with their bank brand encouraged them to endorse the brand to friends and family members. These EBBE benefits ultimately manifest in CBBE and its accompanying positive market performance outcomes (King & Grace, 2009). These outcomes, according to Buil et al. (2013), can be reflected in consumers' positive responses to brands.

Hypotheses Development

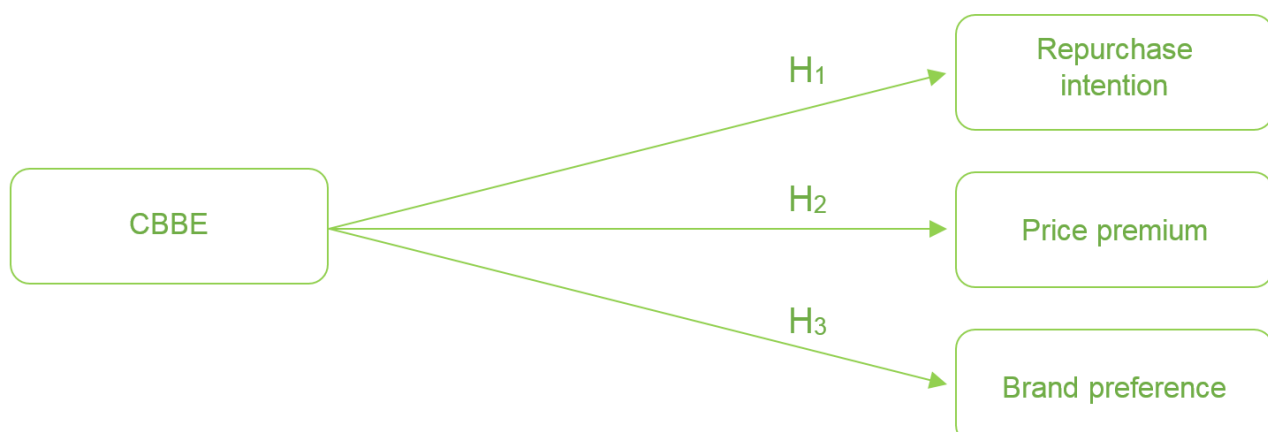
Relationships between CBBE and consumers' brand responses

Contending that positive CBBE influences non-financial market performances of firms in terms of consumers' responses to their brands, Buil et al. (2013) examined the impact of CBBE on four consumer responses to brands. These four responses were (i) consumers' willingness to pay a premium price, (ii) attitude towards brand extension, (ii) brand preference and (iv) repurchase intention. Buil et al. (2013) tested their hypotheses with Adidas, Nike, Sony, Panasonic, BMW and Volkswagen. These brands were selected from the sportswear, electronics and car product categories in the UK and Spain. From their empirical testing of the impact of CBBE on the four consumer responses to the selected brands, Buil et al. (2013) found that CBBE positively and significantly influenced all four responses. Of these four responses, the current study tested the extent to which CBBE impacts on only three of the responses, namely, (i) consumers' willingness to pay a premium price, (ii) brand preference and (iii) repurchase intention. These three selected responses were applicable to the retail service brand, i.e. a retail bank, examined in this study.

Retailers' brands also generate brand equity, which Arnett, Laverie and Meiers (2003) term 'customer-based retail brand equity' (CBRBE). Arnett et al. (2003:168) describe CBRBE as a "set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a store brand (e.g. Wal-Mart), its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the perceived value of the store brand by its customers (or potential customers)". With CBRBE being CBBE measured in a retail setting, Arnett et al. (2003) assert that a retail brand with strong CBBE can enjoy competitive advantage and other benefits. Even for a retail service brand such as a bank, Donat (2018) reports that CBBE can contribute to several different types of market performance. Since Buil et al. (2013) indicate that CBBE positively and significantly drives non-financial market performance such as customers' brand preference, repurchase intention and a willingness to pay a premium price, we deduced that the CBBE of UBA retail banks would positively impact customers' brand preference, repurchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price. From this deduction and as indicated in Figure 1, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- H₁: There is a positive relationship between UBA's CBBE and its customers' repurchase intention.
- H₂: There is a positive relationship between UBA's CBBE and its customers' willingness to pay a premium price.
- H₃: There is a positive relationship between UBA's CBBE and its customers' brand preference.

FIGURE 1:
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CBBE'S IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS' RESPONSE



Relationships between EBBE and consumers' brand responses

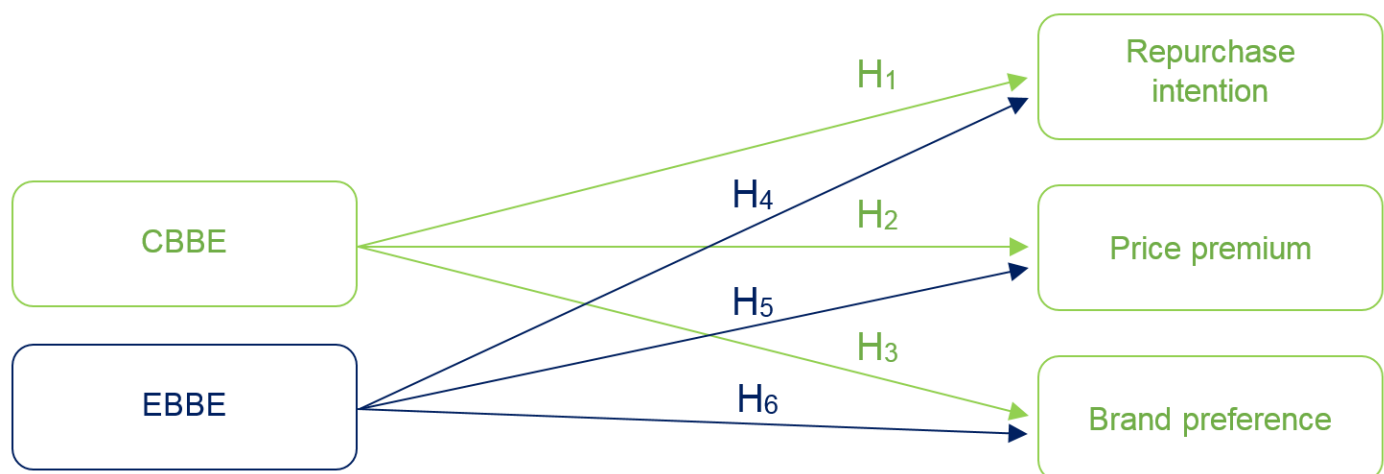
Kwon (2013) views EBBE in terms of how employees' knowledge of the strength of a brand leads to brand commitment and role clarity. He furthermore suggests that it drives customer brand satisfaction, loyalty and equity. When there is high and positive EBBE, employees deliver on their brand's promise, which Kotler and Keller (2006:278) describe as "the marketer's vision of what the brand must be and do for consumers". Following King and Grace's (2010) suggestion that overall EBBE leads to employee satisfaction, brand citizenship behaviour and intention to stay in an organisation, it is expected that with these types of benefits embedded in EBBE, it should lead to the types of market performance which Buil et al. (2013) found to be outcomes of CBBE. With this expectation, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H₄: There is a positive relationship between UBA's EBBE and its customers' repurchase intention.
 H₅: There is a positive relationship between UBA's EBBE and its customers' willingness to pay a premium price.
 H₆: There is a positive relationship between UBA's EBBE and its customers' brand preference.

3.2.3 Can EBBE enhance CBBE impact on consumer brand responses?

The resource-based theory suggests that organisations thrive on a system of interdependent resources which need to be measured in terms of how they sustain competitive advantage and drive market performance (Vomberg et al., 2015). Viewing CBBE and EBBE as two important resources, Vomberg et al. (2015) suggest that CBBE and EBBE can complementarily relate to create relatively more value.

**FIGURE 2:
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF BOTH CBBE AND EBBE IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS' RESPONSE**



With the increased value expected from examining the contributions of both CBBE and EBBE, as presented in Figure 2, it can be hypothesised that:

- H₇: The variances explained of UBA's customer repurchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference will be higher from the testing of model 2 than model 1 in Figures 2 and 1 respectively.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sampling Procedure and Size

Since customer-based and employee-based brand equity had to be measured, data was collected from both UBA customers and employees. The customers and employees were surveyed at twelve UBA branches. Two branches were selected from six of Nigeria's seven provinces. The seventh province was omitted due to the terrorist activities in the province at the time of data collection. UBA employees from all levels of management were drawn from the branches using a cluster non-probability sampling technique (i.e. according to the provinces and bank branches). This sampling method was also used to select the UBA customer participants. The customers were drawn from the retail, commercial and corporate levels of the bank. The retail and commercial customers were approached in the banking offices, at the respondents' convenience, while the willing corporate customers were visited in their respective offices to participate in the study. Employees were met at their place of work.

After 400 questionnaires were administered (200 for UBA employees and 200 for customers), 182 employees successfully completed the questionnaires, representing a 91% response rate for employees. Of the 200 customers surveyed, 178 viable responses were received, representing an 89% response rate for customers. The researcher was directly involved in the collection of data, after obtaining an ethics clearance certificate from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Measures

Scales of previous authors which were found to be reliable and valid were used to measure this study's constructs. CBBE, brand preference, repurchase intention and willingness to pay a premium price were obtained from the study of Buil et al. (2013). Since the authors measured these constructs in the context of sportswear, electronics and car brands, the measurement scales had to be adapted to suit the retail bank studied here. EBBE was measured with Kwon's (2013) scale. However, since this scale was used in an hospital context, it also had to be adapted for a retail bank setting. Considering the adaptation of the scales, the reliability and validity of all the constructs were assessed. Each of the constructs in this study was measured with four items. Following the previous studies, a five-point Likert scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree was used. Before administering the questionnaire, it was first pre-tested with ten customers and ten employees. The reliability results from the pre-test were acceptable, with all the scales' reliability meeting the recommended threshold of 0.7 and above.

Analyses and Results

The analyses started with descriptive statistics to obtain the characteristics of the sample and the mean of the constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted to confirm the dimensions of the constructs, their reliability and validity. Structural equation modelling was lastly conducted to assess the measurement model fit and the relationships in the path models.

(a) Descriptive Statistics for UBA Customers

More males (58.4%) than females participated in the study. This probably reflects that more males than females were customers in the banks studied. It could also simply mean that more males than females were willing to participate in the study. Up to 74% of the respondents were within the ages of 20 to 39. People within this age group are young adults and considered to be Generation Y. Norum (2008) reports that Generation Y consumers are one of the biggest and most attractive consumer segments for various goods and services. Being a retail bank, most of UBA customers (63%) were retail bankers. The commercial bankers were 19%, while the corporate bankers were 18%. A higher number of the customers (55.6%) had postgraduate certificates, compared to customers with undergraduate and diploma certificates (44.6%). The sample also comprised 71% financially well-off customers, compared to 39% of customers who rated themselves as less financially well-off.

(b) Descriptive Statistics for UBA Employees

The gender distribution of UBA employees was almost equal, with 51% being females. The young adult employees within the 20-39 age group represented 73%, while those aged 40-44 years were 14.8%. In terms of level of management, 43% of the employees were low-level managers, 32% were middle managers, 23% were non-management employees, while only 2.2% were top managers. The low representation of the top managers could probably be due to the difficulty of accessing top management employees to participate in the survey. More employees (58%) had a postgraduate certificate, thus signifying that they could better understand their service roles and be knowledgeable about the worth of their bank brand.

TABLE 1:
MEAN, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics					Cronbach's alpha Test				
Research Constructs	Items and constructs' mean values		Items and constructs' Standard Deviation	Item-total	Alpha value	C.R. Value		AVE Value	Factor Loading
CBBE	CBBE1	4.30	0.83		0.71				0.725
	CBBE2	4.08	1.07		0.80				0.854
	CBBE3	4.16	1.255	0.97	0.71	0.86	0.90	0.652	0.787
	CBBE4	4.30	0.71		0.62				0.785
EBBE	EBBE1	3.99	0.88		0.79				0.780
	EBBE2	4.12	0.78		0.85				0.819
	EBBE3	4.18	0.76	0.82	0.85	0.79	0.87	0.630	0.806
	EBBE4	4.08	0.87		0.71				0.768
PPR	PPR1	3.67	1.01		0.77				0.838
	PPR2	3.59	1.060		0.85				0.962
	PPR3	3.82	0.98	1.00	0.83	0.90	0.91	0.709	0.817
	PPR4	3.75	0.97		0.73				0.735
BP	BP1	4.12	0.90		0.74				0.832
	BP2	4.21	0.81	0.80	0.82	0.80	0.86	0.673	0.840
	BP3	4.27	0.69		0.67				0.789
PI	PI1	4.23	0.77		0.78				0.872
	PI2	4.28	0.74		0.86				0.861
	PI3	4.27	0.83	0.77	0.81	0.83	0.91	0.727	0.831
	PI4	4.29	0.73		0.80				0.847

NB: PPR = price premium; BP = brand preference; PI = repurchase intention, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extraction.

CBBE = customer-based brand equity; EBBE = employee-based brand equity

Constructs Mean, Reliability and Validity

Looking at the mean figures in Table 1 and considering that a five-point Likert scale was used to measure the constructs, both customer and employee respondents agreed to the statements measuring CBBE (M = 4.10) and EBBE (M = 4.09) respectively. This means that UBA bank has strong CBBE and EBBE. The customers strongly agreed that they preferred the UBA brand (M = 4.20) and had the intention to repurchase the bank's services (M = 4.27). The customers were, however, neutral as to whether they would be willing to pay a premium price for UBA services with (M = 3.7).

The constructs' reliability was tested with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Table 2 shows that all the reliability values, i.e. Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.79 to 0.90 and composite reliability ranging from 0.86 to 0.91, were all greater than the recommended threshold of 0.7. Construct validity was assessed in terms of discriminant validity and convergent validity. With the factor loadings ranging from 0.73 to 0.96, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.63 to 0.73 and all greater than the recommended 0.5, convergent validity was obtained (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). The correlation results in Table 2 provide proof of discriminant validity. This is because all the correlation coefficients are less than 0.9, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2012).

TABLE 2
CORRELATION MATRIX

	CBBE	EBBE	PP	PI	BP
CBBE	1				
EBBE	.788**	1			
PP	.491**	.463**	1		
PI	.726**	.692**	.395**	1	
BP	.874**	.806**	.495**	.829**	1

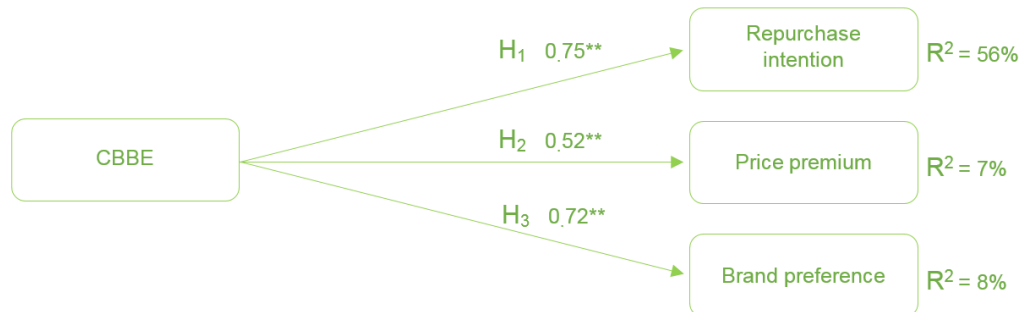
** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Measurement Model

For the assessment of the measurement model and through the goodness-of-fit tests, this study obtained Chi-square (χ^2/df) = 1.491, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.816, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.959, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.940, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.961, Relative Fit Index (RFI) = 0.838, Norm Fit Index (NFI) = 0.890, Random Measure of Standard Error Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.053. These results all show acceptable fits.

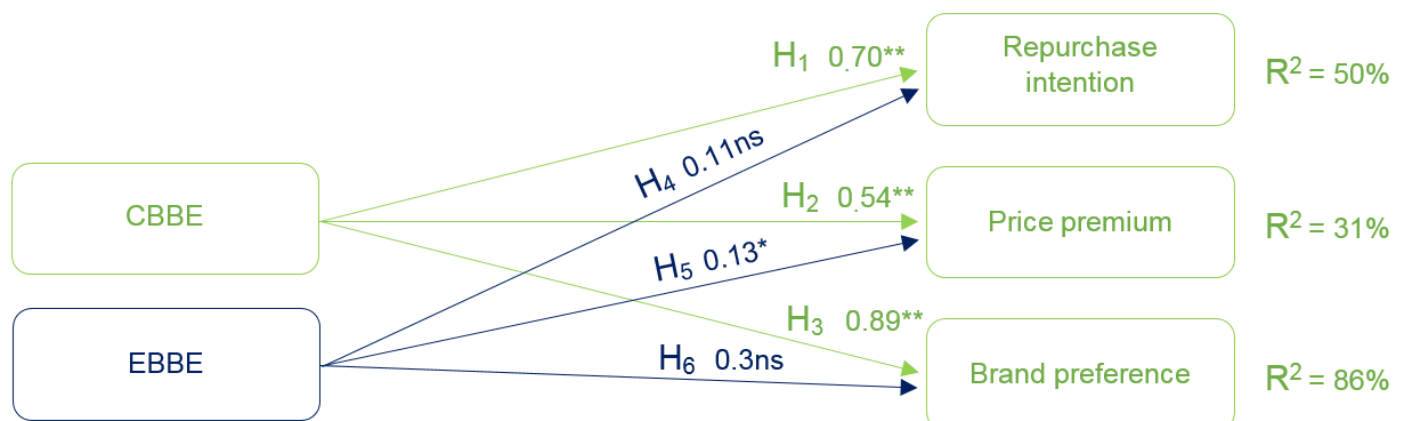
Structural or Path Models

FIGURE 3:
STRUCTURAL MODEL WITHOUT EBBE CONTRIBUTION



** = Significant at $p < 0.01$

FIGURE 4:
STRUCTURAL MODEL WITH EBBE CONTRIBUTION



** = Significant at $p < 0.01$; * = significant at $p < 0.05$; ns = not significant

TABLE 3
VARIANCE EXPLAINED WITH AND WITHOUT EBBE AS A CONTRIBUTOR

Changes in variance explained with and without EBBE in models

Outcome variable	Variance explained in 1 st model without EBBE	Variance explained in 2 nd model with EBBE	Difference in variance explained
Repurchase Intention	56%	50%	-6%
Price Premium	27%	31%	+4%
Brand Preference	68%	86%	+18%

Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses H_1 , H_2 and H_3 posited that there would be positive relationships between UBA's CBBE and its customers' repurchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference. The results in Figure 3 show that all of the hypotheses were supported with ($\beta = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$), ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$) and ($\beta = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$) respectively. For hypotheses H_4 , H_5 and H_6 , it was expected that there would be positive relationships between UBA's EBBE and its customers' repurchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference respectively. With Figure 4 showing ($\beta = -0.11$, ns), ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.03$, ns) for H_3 , H_4 and H_5 respectively, only H_5 was supported. This means that employee-based brand equity only drives UBA customers' willingness to pay a premium price.

Hypotheses 7 postulated that the variance explained of UBA customers' repurchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference would be higher in the model, having both CBBE and EBBE as predictors, than in the model with only CBBE as a predictor. The results in Table 3 reveal that even though UBA customers' brand preference and willingness to pay a premium price increased by 18% and 4% respectively when the contribution of EBBE was factored in, the customers' intention to patronise the bank in the future dropped by 6%. The implications of these results are discussed next.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Considering that the market performance outcomes of brand equity have been mostly assumed, with little empirical testing (Buil et al., 2013), this study examined how two types of brand equities drive consumer responses to a retail service brand. As with the study of Buil et al. (2013) on durable product brands, UBA's customer-based brand equity strongly affected the customers' repurchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference. This is an indication that the bank's customers are not only willing to pay more for the bank's services, but they prefer and plan to patronise the bank in the future due to the brand's CBBE. The power of CBBE in driving customers' responses in the retail sector has also been proven by Swoboda et al. (2013) who found that a retail store's brand equity was what drove customers' store intentional loyalty more than convenient location.

Considering the proven benefits of CBBE, businesses should find ways to build their CBBE. For retailers, Colicev, Malshe and Pauwels (2018) suggest that CBBE can be built from brand awareness, brand impression/image, perceived quality and customer satisfaction. Retailers and future researchers should thus study and identify which of these aspects of CBBE are specifically influencing customers' repurchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference examined in this study. With retail store brands, Calvo-Porrall and Levy-Mangin (2017) found that it was perceived quality services which strongly influenced purchase intention.

The findings of this study indicate that retailers' investments to build and position their brands as attractive, strong and unique in the minds of customers (CBBE) are worthwhile. This is particularly so, because the positive responses from customers generated from CBBE are drivers of financial performance (Buil et al., 2013). It can therefore be suggested that of the five areas that will drive the success of retailing in the future, as outlined by Grewal et al. (2017), the building and measuring of retail brand equity should be added. The sustainability of brand equity,

however, depends on how much employees understand their role in brand building and are committed to delivering on the brand's promise. In other words, the brand equity, which accounts for positive customer responses, needs to be supported by EBBE (King & Grace, 2010).

In terms of the support that EBBE can provide to customers' positive responses, this study found that in addition to specifically affecting UBA customers' willingness to pay a premium price, the addition of EBBE in model 2 improved the extent to which CBBE explained customers' willingness to pay a premium price and brand preference. This implies that when UBA employees understand their role, have a sound knowledge of the strength of their brand and are committed to delivering on the brand's promise (that is, positive EBBE), this will not only cause the bank's customers to be willing to pay more for the services they receive, but it will increase the degree to which CBBE drives brand preference.

Even though it was hypothesised that UBA's EBBE would positively impact on repurchase intention, it was surprising that EBBE had a negative relationship with repurchase intention. This reduced the variance explained of repurchase intention when EBBE was factored into model 2. This could be explained by the fact that consumers' brand consideration, as observed by Baxendale, Macdonald and Wilson (2015), was being influenced by various touchpoints such as retail advertising, brand advertising, in-store communication and peer observation (customers influenced by other customers). Of these touchpoints, Baxendale et al. (2015) found that peer observation had a stronger persuasive and more pervasive influence on customers' brand consideration. The findings of Baxendale et al. (2015) can assist in explaining the negative relationship between EBBE and repurchase intention. For example, as much as UBA employees' services should positively entice the customers to develop the intention to re-patronise the bank, the bank's customers could also be receiving external pressure from friends, banking with other Nigerian banks, to switch banks. This then reduces the possibility of repurchase intention.

Another hindrance to repurchase intention may be other banks' advertising, promising better services and deals. This can be particularly so, considering the finding of Wang et al. (2012) that for a banking firm, brand advertising positively affects brand evaluation. Thus, in addition to brand owners' internal brand equity building efforts for positive customer responses, other third parties' touchpoints or influences, such as word-of-mouth, peer observation, other media and social effects should be considered (Baxendale et al., 2015).

LIMITATIONS AND AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study makes some practical and theoretical contributions to marketing, brand management and human resource management by highlighting the market performance benefits of both CBBE and EBBE, it is not without limitations. The first limitation is the methodology. This study adopted a self-administered questionnaire with a cross-sectional design. With surveys like this, there could be the problem of social desirability bias, whereby respondents may be inclined to give favourable answers. To check for this possibility, customers' reported brand preference, repurchase intention and willingness to a premium price should be checked with an experimental design or a longitudinal study.

A second limitation is the fact that the study was conducted in large cities – mainly provincial state capitals – where more educated, knowledgeable and affluent respondents reside and work. To get a broader picture of UBA's CBBE and EBBE and the extent to which they affect customers' brand response, future research should obtain data from other urban areas and/or add some rural areas. A larger sample size. Furthermore, future research should test the hypotheses with other retail banks, service firms and even other business sectors.

While this study has shown that both CBBE and EBBE have some influence on UBA's market performance in terms of customers' positive brand responses, it will be useful to examine the moderating roles of other brands' advertising, peers and other social influences, which are important persuasive touchpoints, as observed by Baxendale et al. (2015). Other possible outcomes of CBBE and EBBE, such as resistance to competitors' persuasive advertising to switch banks and customers' and employees' willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth should be investigated. Also important for further studies would be the investigation of the sources of UBA's CBBE and EBBE brand equity in the first place. Keller's (2013) CBBE or resonance model and Kwon's (2013) EBBE models of sources of brand equity would be useful in this regard.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Brand equity, the added value or benefits that a brand name gives to a product (Aaker, 1991), provides a stream of benefits to consumers, manufacturers, investors as well as different types of retailers (Keller, 2013). This includes retail service banks, as this study reveals. Thus, as companies and various brand owners invest in building their brands, the benefits of these efforts from both internal (employee) and external (customer) perspectives should be regularly measured. This is particularly important because in addition to the market value they can generate, the resultant strong brand equity can offset many performance failures, as noted by Brady, Cronin, Fox and Roehm (2008) in four industries. For premium price and brand preference, which increased with the factoring of EBBE into their relationship with CBBE, the current study contributes by confirming the resource-based view. The theory posits that organisations are systems of interdependent resources, which complement each other to create more value to the firm, especially in the service sector (Vomberg et al., 2015).

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Navigating on the antecedents that influence store patronage, apparel purchase decision and store attachment among the Generation Y cohort

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the influence of store reputation, social influence, store atmospherics and store convenience on store patronage and apparel purchase decision on store attachment among the Generation Y female cohort in Johannesburg, South Africa. The aim of the study is to identify which independent variable is the most effective at influencing store patronage behaviour and apparel purchase decision and whether this, in turn, will lead to store attachment. This has been undertaken through a quantitative analysis of participants' responses. Additionally, the premise of this study is that Generation Y whom are obsessed with fashion have a significant purchasing power, yet studies on store attachment on young South African females remain limited. Upon examination of the questionnaire results, it was found that most of the latent variables have a positive relationship with each other. However, store patronage behaviour emerged as having the strongest relationship with apparel purchase decision, suggesting that female Generation Y consumers strongly consider which store they purchase their apparel from. In conducting this study, the results highlight the importance of continued research in the field of store patronage and store attachment as a means of reaching a lucrative segment such as Generation Y female South Africans.

Keywords: Apparel stores, patronage, purchase decision, attachment

In today's contemporary business environment, apparel retailers are interested in determining the different factors that enhance customers to patronise their stores to ultimately become attached. Mokoena and Maziriri (2017:157) "Generation Y female students are faced with an observing procedure of choosing the ideal apparel retail store to be loyal to and from which to purchase dress items".

The hidden conclusions concerning how and why individuals shop has dependably been a point of study. Du Preez and Visser (2003) express that the apparel industry in South Africa is huge, capital driven and particularly concentrated, likewise female shopping behaviour inside the South African clothing setting is an unpredictable no wonder given the multicultural shopper society. Generation Y being the children of the age X have been associated as far as family, school and broad communications into devouring sooner than past ages (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Generation Y additionally have a noteworthy buying power as per Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) whom are fixated on style (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017) and are available to new thoughts and ideas identifying with conspicuous shopping behaviour. In any case, Kim and Jang (2014) include that they are likewise status seeking for purchasers. In this manner, in accordance with Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017) Generation Y shoppers are an essential generation cohort for design or fashion related purchases.

Bakewell et al. (2003) further include that female shopping patterns state how females appreciate the shopping procedure, investing a great deal of time and mental vitality into their shopping. It is not unexpected to find that

shopping is viewed as leisure time generally for females. Giovannini, Xu and Thomas (2015) clarifies that for the Generation Y populace, extravagance is an unmistakable and is unquestionably not seen as a benefit but rather more of a right. Due to their high level of self-esteem and exceptionally high level of brand consciousness, Generation Y's who originate from college students and becoming established in the workforce settle on acquiring choices dependent on the supposition of their companions (Giovannini, Xu & Thomas, 2015).

Deducing from the discussion on the significance of apparel consumption among the Generation Y cohort, it is important to take note of that, while many research examines have concentrated on Generation Y customers and students specifically (Thompson, Ellis, Soni & Paterson, 2018; Akpojivi & Bevan-Dye, 2015; Bevan-Dye, Garnett & De Klerk, 2012; Koutras 2006), there is meagre research on studies that have concentrated on the effect of store reputation, social influence, store atmospherics and convenience as well as how these factors directly influence store patronage behaviour and apparel purchasing decision, ultimately leading to store attachment among Generation Y female student consumers. Previous research has examined Generation Y in various contexts by focusing on consumer shopping styles (Mandhlazi, Dhurup, & Mafini, 2013:154), impulsive fashion apparel consumption (Dhurup, 2014), Generation Y students' attitude towards online shopping (Makhitha, 2014) African Generation Y male students' fashion consciousness behaviour (Motale, Bevan-Dye & De Klerk, 2014) and innovation and risk-taking propensity of Generation Y students in South Africa (Koloba & May, 2014).

Along these lines, it tends to be noticed that there is an absence of studies that have determined the antecedents that influence store patronage, apparel purchase decision and store attachment among the Generation Y female student consumers and the fundamental motivation behind this investigation is to fill this gap. This investigation is likewise imperative in that its results might be used to help marketers and retailers to develop and implement strategies that will ultimately make Generation Y female students approach their apparel retail stores.

This article pursues a set structure. To start with, this examination is put into context. Secondly, the theoretical framework underlying this study is displayed, accordingly prompting the development of research hypotheses. Thirdly, the research design and methodology section follow. Finally, the findings, discussion and a conclusion are presented.

Rationale and Importance of Selecting Young Adult Generation Y Female consumers

This section outlines the examination's setting by giving a short foundation about Generation Y female buyers. According to Aliman, Ariffin and Hashim (2018), Generation Y, are known as the Millennials or echo-boomers. Furthermore, Archana and Heejin (2008) consider Generation Y consumers to be individuals born between 1980 and 1994, while Kapoor and Solomon (2011) define Generation Y as youths who were born between 1980 and 1999. Additionally, Inseng (2019) notes that Generation Y (Gen Y) females love shopping. Precisely, females, especially in the Gen Y cohort, tend to shop and spend their money on what they love, such as clothing, shoes, makeup, jewellery and DVDs (Inseng, 2019). Beaudoin, Lachance and Robitaille (2003:23) argue that "regardless of age, females play a significantly greater role in comparison to males in the process of fashion diffusion". From the aforementioned elucidations, it can be observed that Generation Y female consumers hold particular relevance in the retailing environment as well as in academia. The subsequent section is centred on the theoretical framework of the study.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Firstly, the social identity theory is adopted as the theoretical lens in this research. Secondly, the authors identified the Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992) patronage model as a theoretical model that could serve as a point of departure to investigate the nexus between the variables under investigation. Lastly, the authors also identified the interpersonal attachment theory pioneered by Bowlby (1980) as the theoretical grounding of this study.

The social identity theory (SIT)

"SIT arose after several decades of academic inquiry into the association between the individual and society together with the growth of an individual's personal and social identities" (Baker, 2012:129). The pioneer of SIT was

Henri Tajfel who published several studies concerning group processes. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986:33), "social identity is well-defined as the aspects of a person's self-image that are derived from the social categories to which he perceives himself as fitting". "SIT defines how group affiliations have the ability to stimulate individual behaviours" (Tajfel & Turner 1986:33). Cunniff and Mostert (2012:4) point out that the theory of social identity proposes that, in order for people to achieve positive self-images, they use the process of categorisation. They categorise other people into 'in' or 'out' groups, where they are members of the in-group (Hertel & Kerr 2001:316). In this regard, group identity influences the manner in which individuals react to situations (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991:530) and in the same way, group members influence an individual's attitudes and behaviours (McKinley, Mastro & Warber, 2014:1050). In addition, the SIT assumes that individuals strive for a positive self-concept, which can be reached through a positive social identity (Niens, Cairns, Finchilescu, Foster & Tredoux 2003:109). Subsequently, individuals may reach a positive social identity by comparing themselves or the group they identify with, with other social groups. Therefore, the SIT was used in this study because it is a theory of group membership and it explains that individuals need to conform to a group (Korte 2007:168). Moreover, since one of the variables in this study is social influence, the social identity theory perfectly forms as a theoretical grounding for this study as the researchers seek to explore the proposed relationship between social influence and store patronage behaviour.

Shim and Kotsiopoulos Patronage Model on patronage behaviour of apparel shopping

Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992a, 1992b) adapted portions of Darden's (1980) patronage model of consumer behaviour to develop the model on patronage behaviour of apparel shopping. Shim and Kotsiopoulos's (1992a, 1992b) studies contribute to our understanding of retail patronage with their innovative inclusion of patronage choice behaviour as the end of patronage process while excluding consumer values from the model. Use of information sources was another construct that the researchers included in the model as an influential factor of patronage behaviour which was also hypothesised to be influenced by personal characteristics. They used linear regression to test the model. Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1992a) examined the relationships among several variables. They were personal characteristics (the exogenous variables which include lifestyle activities, social class and family life cycle), information sources, store attributes, shopping orientations, and patronage behaviour. The results of multiple regression analyses revealed that all four variables were predictors of apparel patronage behaviour of discount stores, speciality stores, department stores and catalogue shopping. Shopping orientations and the importance of store attributes appeared to be the most influential factors in determining patronage behaviour, followed by information sources and personal characteristics. Thus, five significant relationships hypothesised by Darden (1980) were supported in their study: (a) importance of store attributes patronage behaviour, (b) shopping orientations importance of store attributes, (c) personal characteristics shopping orientations, (d) information sources shopping orientations and (e) personal characteristics information sources.

The interpersonal attachment theory

To get a clear understanding of the context of this research, this study will be anchored in the framework of the Interpersonal Attachment Theory which is deemed to provide an appropriate theoretical grounding to this study. The attachment theory describes the innate human need to form affectionate bonds (Bowlby, 1980). Additionally, this theory propounds that attachment to figures is an inborn behavioural system (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017). Amin & Malin (2012) points out that according to the theory a child shows separation anxiety and distress as soon as a parent or significant other no longer is present. In this case, it would be on the attachment to a store, and if the consumer shows feelings of regret and sorrow when the object is no longer available (Amin & Malin, 2012).

Conversely, Moussa and Touzani (2013:339) argue that many of attachment theory's premises are transferable to the consumer-brand relationship. According to Ismail and Ali (2013:55) the basic underlying premise of attachment theory is "Separation Distress", which refers to the extent to which consumers show their emotions when exposed with real or imagined separation from an object of strong attachment. Thomson (2006) suggests that the attachment theory can contribute to marketing because of the distinctive qualities of an attachment. Therefore, based on the

authors' explanations it can be noted that if the attachment theory is taken into consideration, it can assist retail managers of various retail stores to thoroughly understand what drives Generation Y customers to be satisfied and ultimately to be attached to a store.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

This section is centred on reviewing literature pertaining to the research variables under investigation namely: store reputation; social influence, store atmospherics, store convenience, store patronage, apparel purchase decision and store attachment.

Store Reputation

According to Berg (2013) store reputation is defined as the overall evaluation of a retail store by consumers. In addition, Kim and Lennon (2013) point out that a retailer's reputation affects consumer buying decisions as consumers are more likely to purchase from established and reputable retailers than from unknown retailers. Furthermore, Kim and Lennon (2013) elucidate that the reputation of the store acts as a schema, which has been developed through past experiences with the retailer. This schema forms the basis for consumers' expectations of future experiences with the store (Kim & Lennon, 2013).

Social Influence

According to Lee, Shi, Cheung, Lim and Sia (2011) social influence is the opinions of others that influence purchasing intent. An individual can be highly influenced by his or her social surrounding including relatives, friends, colleagues and business partners. (Anvar & Venter, 2014). Additionally, Kuhn (2010:70) points out that black Generation Y consumers, who are greatly influenced by the opinion of others, rely on information supplied by peers in the selection of an apparel store. In addition, Olajide, Folake, Olabode and Olayinka (2018) notes that social approval is of great importance to the undergraduate as well as the individual peer group standards and through dress the female undergraduate is affiliated to a social peer group. Moreover, Olajide, Folake, Olabode and Olayinka (2018) have argued that university students have exaggerated the need to wear trendy and fashionable wear that will be accepted by their friends and acquaintances pressure rather than maintain clothing practices that should encourage trust, confidence, comfort, respect and sense of responsibility.

Store atmospherics

According to De Farias, Aguiar & Melo (2014:88), atmosphere in marketing is a term used to describe the conscious design of an area to create the desired effect on consumers and it is the effort to design a shopping environment that produces emotional effects on the individual in order to increase their likelihood of purchase. Mathur & Goswami (2014:121) categorised atmosphere as a term that is used to explain our feeling towards the shopping experience, which cannot always be seen. Therefore, atmospherics form the first impression of the store and influence consumers' perceptions towards a store and impacts on a stores' image and consumers' expectations of the retailer's offerings (Oh, Fiorito, Cho & Hofacker, 2008:237). The atmosphere influences the consumer's assessment of the quality of the store and the store image they form (Panna & Gupta 2015:167). Moreover, Sîrbu, Săseanu and Ghiță (2015:568) point out that the concept of store atmosphere reflects the effort to create an environment that generates emotional-specific effects on the buyer, effects which increase the probability of the buyer to purchase.

Store Convenience

According to Selema and Makgosa (2018) convenience is often regarded as a multi-dimensional concept including location, accessibility, opening hours, one-stop shopping and availability of parking spaces. The convenience of reaching the store reflects the ease of driving to the store, store distance from customers' home, time that is taken to reach the store and the availability of public transport (Wel, Hussin & Omar & Nor, 2012:171). For many shoppers,

convenience is essential, the speed and the ease that consumers can contact retailers (finding the merchandise they seek quickly) powerfully influence their retail choice (Bianchi, 2009:311). The location of the store may be the deciding factor for such consumers (Kimani, Kagira, Kendi, Wawire & Fourier, 2012:60). For example, consumers may select a store at the shopping mall because of the proximity with other stores. Ligas and Chaudhuri (2012:254) stressed that the lack of convenient accessibility affects consumers' level of commitment to the store, which might be reflected in store loyalty.

Store patronage behaviour

Teller, Gittenberger and Schnedlitz (2013) established that the cognitive age of elderly consumers (aged 60+) influence perception and subsequent behaviour related to store patronage. Devadas and Manohar (2012) found that younger consumers (aged 20-24+) have store patronage that is based on shopping malls that are considered to be entertaining. Elderly consumers in contrast to younger consumers tend to base their store patronage on shopping malls that present variety and standards that enhance their quality of life (Khare, 2012; Idoko, Ukenna, & Obeta, 2019).

Apparel purchase decision

According to Djatmiko and Pradana (2016) purchase decision is a result of brand image and product price. Consumer purchase decision is the decision-making process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services (Khuong & Duyen, 2016). Apparel stores retail experiences are considered to have a direct influence on consumers' continuous purchase decision (Nikhashemi, Jebarajakirthy & Nusair, 2019). Female consumers' decision making and spending is not only important for the South African retail industry in general but also more specifically for the local apparel retail sector (Bezuidenhout, Jacobs & Sonnenberg, 2016).

Store attachment

According to Badrinarayanan and Becerra (2018) store attachment is influenced by store prestige, affect and equity. In addition, Badrinarayanan and Becerra (2018) suggested that store attachment in turn influences store patronage. Vilches-Montero, Pandit, Bravo-Olavarria and Chao (2018) posited that loyalty to a store is caused by gender and the consumer's attachment to the store's loyalty program.

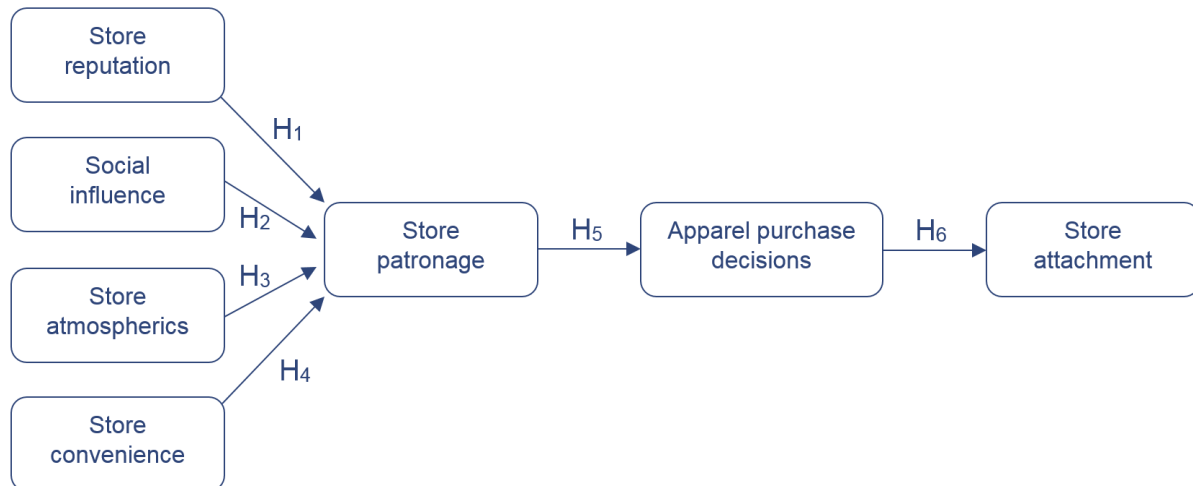
CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A conceptual model describes the relationship between variables investigated in the study (Maziriri, Mapuranga & Madinga, 2018). In addition, Maziriri, Mapuranga and Madinga (2018) add that a schematic diagram of the conceptual model helps the reader to visualise the theorised relationships between the variables in the model and thus to obtain a quick idea about how you think that the problem can be solved. In this study, the conceptual model suggests that store reputation, social influence, store atmospherics and store convenience are the predictor variables. In addition, the conceptual model also suggests that store patronage and apparel purchase decision are the mediating variables. Moreover, the dependent or outcome variable for the current study model is Store attachment. Based on a synthesis of the converging literature related to the research variables, a conceptual model was proposed to guide the empirical study as shown in Figure 1.

Store reputation and store patronage behaviour

How much consumers really care about retailer reputation is crucial as this affects their purchasing decisions (Page & Fearn, 2005). Ou, Abratt and Dion (2006) investigated the impact of retailer reputation on store patronage

**FIGURE 2:
CONCEPTUAL MODEL**



and found that retailer reputation has an effect on purchase frequency, travel time and expenditure levels showing a positive correlation between store reputation and store patronage. Hence, retailer reputation is an important factor that influences consumer's store patronage (Ou, Abratt & Dion 2006). Deducing from the afore-mentioned clarifications, it can be hypothesized:

H₁. Store reputation has a positive and significant impact on store patronage behaviour

Social influence and store patronage behaviour

There is literature on the nexus between social influence and store patronage behaviour however the literature is still in its infancy, hence the need of the current empirical study, to fill in the gaps in the literature on this relationship. However, it has been noted that social influence plays an important role in the consumption process (Argo, Dahl & Manchanda, 2005). A study entitled "The Influence of a Mere Social Presence in a Retail Context" by (Argo et al., 2005) investigated how social presence impacts consumers' emotions and self-presentation behaviour's. A study by Risselada, Vries & Verstappen (2017) interestingly shows how consumers tend to follow other consumers' opinions without forming their own opinion. Therefore, in conclusion it is evident and to see that:

H₂. Social influence has a positive and significant impact on store patronage behaviour.

Store atmospherics and store patronage behaviour

According to Kotler (1974) atmosphere as a marketing tool has been neglected by businesses. Atmospherics can make customers less aware of their wait because they are either distracted or entertained (Grewal, Baker, Levy & Voss, 2003). It should be noted that there are paucities in studies regarding the relationship between store atmospherics and store patronage behaviour. However, there are close related studies that have tried to elaborate on this relationship. For instance, a study by Sharma and Stafford (2000) suggested that store ambience and design positively affect customers' persuasion as well as customers' positive perceptions of salespeople. Visser, Du Preez and Van Noordwyk (2006) investigated the impact of store atmosphere amongst other factors and results suggested that store atmosphere in itself, had a positive relationship with store patronage behaviour. Therefore, inferring from the literature provided it can be hypothesised that:

H₃. Store atmospherics has a positive and significant impact on store patronage behaviour.

Store Convenience and store patronage behaviour

A study conducted by (Moeller & Heider, 2012) showed that a significant relationship exists between patronage preferences in on-the-go consumption and the variety of products offered as well as the opportunity to consume products without effort. In addition, a study by (Pan & Zinkhan, 2006) entitled "Determinants of retail patronage" found that convenience has a positive impact on store patronage. Drawing from the afore-mentioned discussion it can be noted that:

H₄. Store convenience has a positive and significant impact on store patronage behaviour.

Store Patronage and apparel purchase decision

Consumers face store patronage decisions daily (Thang & Tan, 2003). The literature on the association store patronage behaviour and apparel purchase decision is very limited. However, a study by (Yavas, 2001) investigated the patronage motives as well as product purchase patterns within the context of a mall. Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017) found that brand and self-identity mostly dictate the Generation Y consumers' attitudes towards fashion apparel, but findings also revealed that apparel brand, style, price, and social identity are the most influential factors of Generation Y consumers' purchase intentions for apparel purchase.

H₅. Store patronage behaviour has a positive and significant impact on apparel purchase decision.

Store Patronage behaviour and store attachment

Customer satisfaction with a store is said to be one of the most important predictors of store loyalty (Francioni, Savelli & Cioppi, 2018). A study by (Konuk, 2018) investigated how retailer innovativeness in conjunction with perceived food healthiness can influence store prestige, store trust, and store loyalty. Findings revealed a positive relationship between store prestige, store trust and store loyalty. A study by (Garton, 2018) argues that differential congruence is critical to achieving store loyalty. Findings revealed that retailers need to define their customers, their product and their store in order to achieve store loyalty. In conclusion, it can be hypothesized that:

H₆. Store patronage behaviour has a positive and significant impact on store attachment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study undertook a research approach that is consistent with the positivist paradigm as it attempted to examine the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Being quantitative in nature, the measurement instrument was compiled from existing scales that were adapted to suit the purpose of the study. Once scale reliability and validity were established, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the model fit, followed by the hypotheses testing. SEM was performed using Amos 25 software, and the descriptive statistics were obtained through SPSS 25 software.

The target population for this study is Generation Y (18-34-year old) females residing in Braamfontein, a region of Johannesburg in South Africa.

Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique was adopted in selecting participants for the study due to the absence of known population size and the difficulty of obtaining a sampling from which to select the respondents.

To obtain reliable results, this study used a sample of 300 participants who are Generation Y (18-34-year old) females residing in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. This sample size met the recommended criteria proposed Boomsma (1982) of 100 and 200 participants necessary for structural equation modelling.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Research scales were operationalised based on prior work. Proper modifications were made to fit the current research context and purpose. A 7-item scale for store reputation was adapted from Ou, Abratt & Dion (2006). In addition, social influence was assessed using a 4-item scale adapted from Zhao, Stylianou & Zheng (2018), further store convenience was measured using a 16-item scale adapted from Gahinet & Cliquet (2018). Store atmospherics was also measured for the purpose of this study and was measured using a 7-item scale measurement adapted from Walsh, Shiu, Hassan, Michaelidou, Beatty & (2010). A 4-item scale adapted from Rahman, Wong & Yu (2016) was used to measure store patronage behaviour. Apparel purchase decision was measured using a 10-item scale adapted from O'Cass (2000). Lastly, store attachment was measured using a 7-item scale adapted from Das (2014) and Jung & Yoon (2012). All were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to express the degree of agreement.

**TABLE 1:
ACCURACY ANALYSIS STATISTICS**

Construct	Items	Item-to-total correlation values	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Factor loadings
Store Reputation	SR1	0.628	0.845	0.84	0.42	0.644
	SR2	0.670				0.697
	SR3	0.572				0.660
	SR4	0.594				0.683
	SR5	0.593				0.632
	SR6	0.581				0.619
	SR7	0.567				0.604
Social Influence	SI1	0.672	0.852	0.83	0.56	0.796
	SI2	0.740				0.905
	SI3	0.696				0.653
	SI4	0.660				0.615
Store Convenience	SC8	0.556	0.828	0.81	0.59	0.859
	SC9	0.556				0.800
	SC10	0.543				0.637
Store Atmospherics	SA4	0.548	0.853	0.88	0.65	0.606
	SA5	0.703				0.877
	SA6	0.740				0.948
	SA7	0.687				0.746
Store Patronage Behaviour	SPB1	0.675	0.870	0.85	0.59	0.646
	SPB2	0.768				0.770
	SPB3	0.759				0.853
	SPB4	0.679				0.800
Apparel Purchase Decision	APD1	0.629	0.903	0.91	0.53	0.651
	APD3	0.726				0.706
	APD4	0.721				0.677
	APD5	0.798				0.794
	APD6	0.616				0.619
	APD7	0.787				0.851
	APD8	0.617				0.674
	APD9	0.755				0.797
	APD10	0.719				0.765
Store Attachment	SAT1	0.652	0.864	0.87	0.53	0.763
	SAT3	0.727				0.760
	SAT4	0.682				0.743
	SAT5	0.616				0.667
	SAT6	0.688				0.713
	SAT7	0.644				0.722

Respondent profile

In terms of the respondents' demographic profile, 204 out of 300 participants were between the ages of 18 and 20. This age group represents 68% of the study's respondents. Note that all participants in this study were female. 30% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 25. 1.3 % were between the ages of 26 and 29, and the minority age of respondents were between the ages of 30-34 and they constituted only 0.7% of the study's participants. This shows that the majority (68%) of the respondents were the younger Generation Y between the age of 18-20, and which are referred to as young adults. This could emanate from the fact that most students were surveyed. In addition, it can

be observed that first-year respondents accounted for 42% of the study's participants, while 27.3% were second-year students, 18.3% were third-year students, 2.7% were fourth-year students, and lastly 9.7% were postgraduate students. Furthermore, in terms of allowance, the allowance each respondent receives per month. 19.7% receive less than R500. 29% of the respondent's receive between R500 – R1000. 26.3% of the respondents receive R1000 – R1500 and 25% receive more than R2000. Moreover, the average monthly spending on apparel by the respondents. 28.7% spend less than R300 per month on apparel. 38.3% of the respondent's spend between R300 – R600 per month on apparel. 21.7% of the respondents spend between R600 – R1000 per month on apparel and 11.3% spend more than R1000 per month.

Scale accuracy analysis

The scale accuracy analysis is presented in Table 1 on the previous page followed by a discussion of the measurement scale reliability and validity.

Reliability

According to Nunnally (1978) the reliability of a measure is supported if Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 or higher. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.828 to 0.903 exceeding 0.7 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). In addition, the Cronbach's alpha scores indicated that each construct exhibited strong internal reliability, Lee (2009). Therefore, Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs exceeded the recommended 0.70 thus meeting the required threshold and demonstrating that the constructs used to measure variables are very reliable for all the variables.

Table 1 above shows the loading of each item on their particular construct. The least value for each respective item loadings for the research constructs is 0,603. Therefore, all the individual item loadings exceeded the recommended value of 0, 5 (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). This indicates that all the measurement instruments are acceptable and reliable since all the individual items converged well and with more than 50% of each item's variance shared with its respective construct (Fraering & Minor 2006).

Composite reliabilities (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct were also computed using the formulae proposed by Fornell and Lacker (1981:22) i.e.

$$CR\eta = (\sum \lambda_{yi})^2 / [(\sum \lambda_{yi})^2 + (\sum \epsilon_i)]$$

Where

CR η = Composite reliability, $(\sum \lambda_{yi})^2$ = Square of the summation of the factor loadings; $(\sum \epsilon_i)$ = Summation of error variances.

$$V\eta = \sum \lambda_{yi}^2 / (\sum \lambda_{yi}^2 + \sum \epsilon_i)$$

Where

V η = Average Variance Extracted (AVE); $\sum \lambda_{yi}^2$ = Summation of the squared of factor loadings; $\sum \epsilon_i$ = Summation of error variances".

As shown from the results shown in Table 2, Composite reliability values ranged from 0.83 to 0.91 which is acceptable as this exceed 0.7 (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2009). Most of the average variance extracted values were above 0.5 which is consisted with the 0.5 recommended by Fraering and Minor (2006). This indicates that convergent validity was achieved, and this further confirms an excellent internal consistency and reliability of the measurement instruments used. "As such, all pairs of constructs revealed an adequate level of discriminant validity (see Table 2). By and large, these results provided evidence for acceptable levels of research scale reliability" (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:20; Chinomona & Mofokeng, 2016).

Discriminant validity

The inter-construct correlation matrix is used to assess the validity of measurement instruments, specifically discriminant validity. Correlations among constructs were evaluated to see if they were lower than 1. The higher the correlation between variables, the lower the validity of those variables. The inter-construct values are required to be below 0.6 and in some cases below 0.85 to indicate discriminant validity. According to Table 3, the highest correlation value was 0.712 and the lowest correlation value was -.014. These correlation values are below 0.85 and, therefore, it can be concluded that there is discriminant validity between all the constructs (Morar, Venter, & Chuchu, 2015).

**TABLE 2:
CORRELATION MATRIX**

Variables	SR	SI	SC	SA	SPB	APD	SAT
Store reputation (SR)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Influence (SI)	.223**	1	-	-	-	-	-
Store Convenience (SC)	.292**	-.014	1	-	-	-	-
Store Atmospherics (SA)	.314**	.167**	.182**	1	-	-	-
Store Patronage Behaviour (SPB)	.460**	.161**	.287**	.253**	1	-	-
Apparel Purchase Decision (APD)	.247**	.255**	.050	.120*	.320**	1	-
Store Attachment (SAT)	.470**	.166**	.303**	.308**	.712**	.274**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING (SEM)

Measurement model evaluation

A confirmatory model development strategy was followed to confirm the dimensional structure of the constructs used in this research as well as the level of internal consistency among the respective indicators. Precisely, a measurement model was specified using maximum likelihood extrapolation (MLE) technique. Initial model estimation was extrapolated at CMIN/DF=2.464 (<3.0); $p < 0.01$. It is imperative to note that the significant chi-square value is disregarded by researchers due to the sensitivity of the index too large sample sizes and many indicators (Malhotra, 2010). To overcome this limitation, Byrne (2010:77) proffers that a more “pragmatic approach is to report on multiple indices that are not based on the central distribution”. Therefore, the following indices demonstrated adequate model fit as follows: CMIN/DF 1.711, CFI 0.919, GFI 0.798, NFI 0.827, TLI 0.912 and RMSEA 0.052.

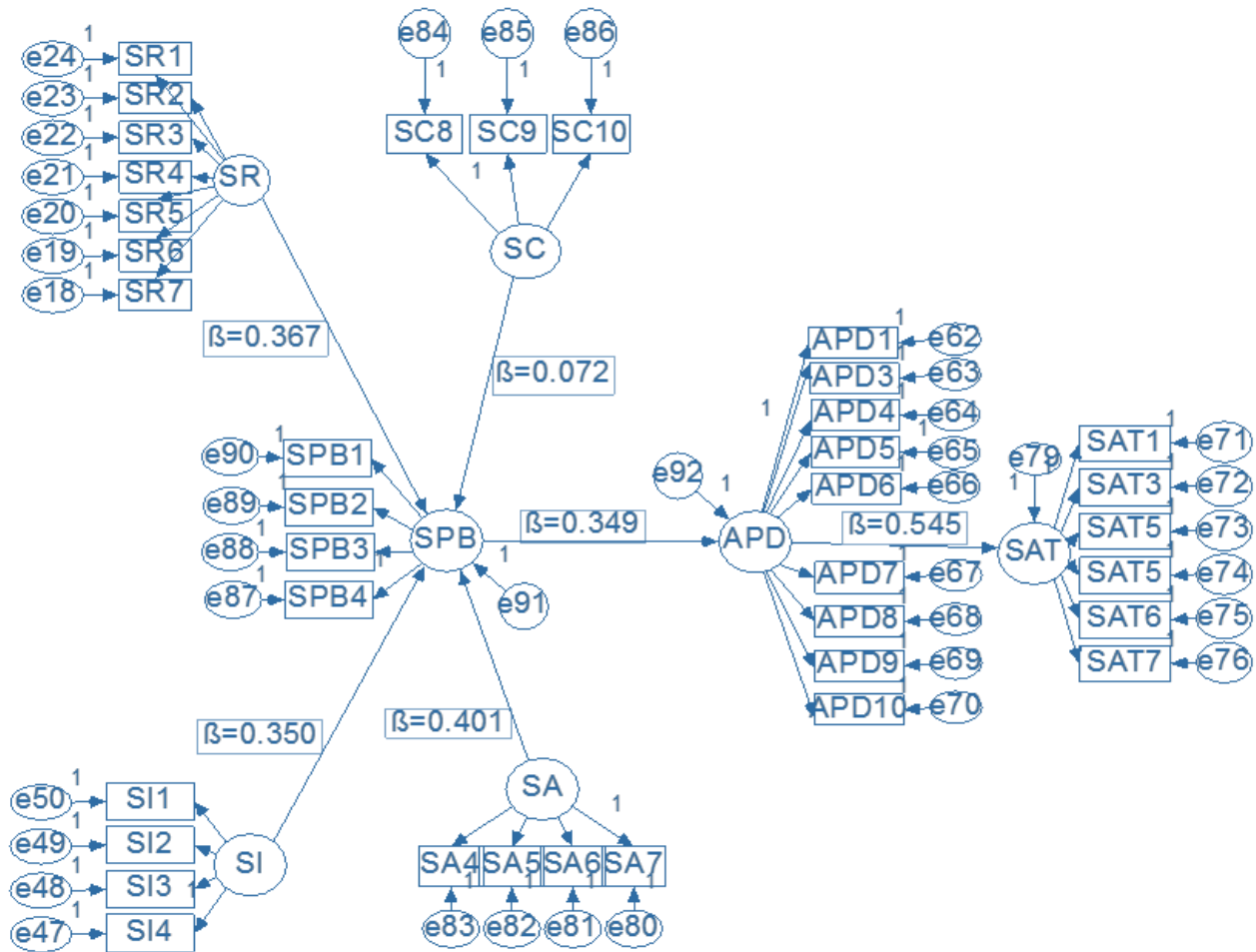
STRUCTURAL MODEL ASSESSMENT AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Results of the structural model analysis indicated that all the structural model fit statistics were within the tolerable ranges: $\chi^2/df = 1.711$; CFI=0.919, IFI = 0.920; TLI = 0.912; RMSEA = 0.052. A good fit is normally deemed to exist when NFI, GFI and CFI were all greater than 0.9, Chang and Chen (2009). Moreover, figure 3 depicts a structure model. A structural model examination aims to evaluate the strength and direction of relationships among constructs in a model (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

STRUCTURAL MODEL

This section presents an illustration of the structural model that was used for path analysis. This was to establish whether to reject the proposed hypotheses or not.

FIGURE 3:
STRUCTURAL MODEL



HYPOTHESES RESULTS

The table below presents the results of the tested hypotheses

TABLE 3: HYPOTHESES RESULTS

Constructs	Hypotheses	Path coefficient values	P value	Result/Decision
SR → SPB	H1	0.367	***	Supported and significant
SI → SPB	H2	0.350	***	Supported and significant
SA → SPB	H3	0.401	***	Supported and significant
SC → SPB	H4	0.072	0.134	Supported but not significant
SPB → APD	H5	0.349	***	Supported and significant
APD → SAT	H6	0.545	***	Supported and significant

DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES TESTING

The results obtained following the test of H_1 confirmed that there is a positive relationship between advertising on Store Reputation and Store Patronage Behaviour, referred to as an independent variable in the study. A path coefficient of 0.367 at $p < 0.001$ level of significance suggesting that Store Reputation has a positive influence on Store Patronage Behaviour. These results are in line with the works of (Ou, Abratt & Dion, 2006) who explain that the likelihood that consumers will shop at a preferred store increases as the perception of the store becomes more positive.

The results obtained following the test of H_2 confirmed that there is a positive relationship between Social Influence and Store Patronage Behaviour with a path coefficient of 0.350 at $p < 0.001$ level of significance. This finding has ample support from previous empirical research studies such as that conducted by (Evans, Christiansen & Gill, 1996) who highlighted previous research done by Midgley, Dowling, and Morrison (1989) who's findings revealed that clothing purchases are affected by social referent influence, however this influence can vary by characteristics of the consumer.

The results obtained following the test of H_3 confirmed that there is a supported relationship between Store Atmospherics and Store Patronage Behaviour with a path coefficient of 0.401. This relationship is also significant at $p < 0.001$. These results imply that the store's physical environment may induce a Generation Y female consumer to patronise an apparel retail store.

The results obtained following the test of H_4 confirmed that there is a positive relationship between Store Convenience and Store Patronage Behaviour, referred to as an independent variable in this study. A path coefficient of 0.072 was realized after testing this hypothesis, meaning that store convenience was influenced female Generation Y consumers' in-store patronage. However, this was not a very important factor. This finding is in line with the works of (Berry, Seiders & Grewal, 2002) to some extent that suggested that consumers use convenience as a basis for making purchasing decisions.

The results obtained following the test of H_5 confirmed that there is a positive relationship between Store Patronage Behaviour and Apparel Purchase decision. A path coefficient of 0.349 was realized after testing this hypothesis, meaning that female Generation Y consumers consider which store they purchase their apparel from. Furthermore, this influence is supported by a 99% level of significance between the two constructs. This finding substantiates the fact that the process in which consumers select a specific store to shop at has been found similar to the process consumers use for brand choice (Zulqarnain, Zafar & Shahzad, 2015).

The results obtained following the test of H_6 confirmed that there is a positive relationship between apparel purchase decision and store attachment. A path coefficient of 0.545 was realized after testing this hypothesis, meaning that female Generation Y consumers consider being loyal or attached to apparel stores that they have made an apparel purchase decision from.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The framework developed in this study will make a positive contribution to the body of knowledge and the growing literature on; store reputation; social influence, store atmospherics, store convenience, store patronage, apparel purchase decision and store attachment. In addition, this study contributes to developing a profile on the buying behaviour of Generation Y consumers within the Gauteng Province of South Africa. Therefore, the findings of this study will contribute as marketing strategy guidelines for marketers seeking to reach this segment and will be of value to South African marketers, as well as international advertisers seeking to target this market segment.

This current study investigated how store reputation, social influence, store atmospherics and store convenience influences Generation Y females store patronage to apparel stores, leading to store attachment thereafter. Generation Y consumers form an important segment in the generation cohort for fashion-related purchases and contribute nearly 70 percent of their money towards fashion and apparel goods (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings obtained in this study provides practical implications for retail managers and marketing managers. More precisely, the findings may add value to fashion apparel retailers by assisting them in understanding better, underlying factors which enhance store patronage behaviour, purchase decisions of the consumers and ultimately store attachment. Marketers need to expand their marketing effort and campaign as well as promotional activities, this will keep marketers connect to the Generation Y cohort. However, marketers within the fashion apparel industry are advised to categorise their target market based on the researched factors of this study in order to satisfy each segment accordingly. The reason being is that each generation portrays different shopping behaviours. Furthermore, this study clearly shows that store reputation, social influence, store atmospherics and store convenience are pertinent factors in explaining store patronage behaviour and store attachment among Generation Y consumers.

LIMITATIONS

The current study contains some limitations. Firstly, the data collected is based on responses from only female and university participants. While women may be the prime consumers of apparel, men also purchase apparel items. More so, non-university consumers may respond differently to store patronage, apparel purchase decision and attachment of apparel stores. Another limitation relates to the use of a single method of data collection, which is a quantitative approach. Perhaps if a mixed method approach was used, the results could be more insightful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The alarming results of this study cannot be overlooked and may be availed as opportunities for retailers. Apparel retailers ought to consider putting their endeavours in improving their store reputation as well as considering that Generation Y female students are highly influenced by store atmospherics, social influence and store convenience to patronise their stores, to make apparel purchase decisions and ultimately to be attached to stores. Furthermore, in order to make apparel purchase decisions, apparel retailers need to give adequate data to a customer to feel good in deciding which apparel products to purchase. Berman and Evans (2013:202) also pointed out that point of purchase ads, product displays, and knowledgeable sales personnel can provide customers with the information they need. Hence, fashion retailers, together with marketers, can foster greater involvement with apparel products as the consumers obtain all information regarding apparel products.

Consumers with a high level of apparel involvement are likely to wear innovative and trendy clothing and are risk-takers (Halepete 2006:234). Subsequently, it very well may be noticed that if Generation Y female undergraduates are profoundly included with various apparel products and stores, they will have a greater knowledge of apparel and the stores that offer these apparel products. Truth be told, their trust in the choice of clothing items and stores will be expanded.

It is imperative for apparel retailers to have a reasonable comprehension of the requirements, needs and inclinations for the Generation Y female cohort so that they can respond accordingly for their satisfaction. Apparel retailers can utilise biographical information as a reason for segmenting this market. Information such as age, year of study and monthly allowance received can assist them in recognising precisely who their clients are, which advertising media will appeal to them and finally, how long will they study at their institution of higher learning. Apparel retailers have to alter their current marketing strategies or adapt them to respond to continuous changes in needs.

Furthermore, retail store managers must provide a good service to consumers in order to build positive shopping experiences for apparel products purchasing. For example, apparel retailers can capitalise on some of the predictor variables identified in this study such as store atmospherics and store reputation. These variables influence consumers' patronage behaviour, apparel purchase decisions as well as store attachments. For example, apparel retailers can create a pleasing store atmosphere, which will increase consumer's preferences in their store. Realising what atmospheric variables impact on customers' feelings may assist retailers in gathering appropriate marketing strategies to make and keep up a positive shopping experience among customers (Yalcim & Kocamaz 2003:275).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the limitations of the study was that it utilised only Generation Y female student consumers within the University of the Witwatersrand. This limits the possibility to generalise the results to include Generation Y female student consumers in South Africa. Another limitation concerns the use of a single method of data collection. This study employed a quantitative research approach. Future research may consider both a qualitative and quantitative research design using triangulation methodology, where a qualitative design could be used in generating rich ideas and explanations.

It would probably be worthwhile to utilise both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to supplement each other. A qualitative design may be helpful in making follow-ups to the responses provided in the quantitative design. Consequently, the quantitative responses are validated by these follow-ups. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates and highlighted the influence of store reputation, social influence, social media influence, store atmospherics and store convenience on store patronage behaviour and apparel purchase decision and how such can affect store attachment by female Generation Y consumers.

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Determining banner advertisement effectiveness in mobile games: A study from South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the impact of advertising values, gameplay conditions and social influence on attitude toward in-game banner advertisements (IGBAs) in mobile games. In addition, the study tested intention to click IGBAs and preference toward the advertised brand. Banner advertisements in mobile games are one of the most popular formats in mobile marketing, but research on their effectiveness is still limited. Survey research was conducted in South Africa on 426 participants. The results showed that irritation has a negative impact on the gamer's attitude, while other values—entertainment, credibility, gameplay conditions, and social influence—have a significant positive impact on the gamer's attitudes. In turn, attitude had significant influences on intention to click on the IGBA and preference toward the advertised brand. Contrary to earlier research, informativeness had an insignificant impact on the gamer's attitude. This study provides a new framework that combines the study of the gamer's attitude toward IGBAs and its impact on both intention to click and the preference of brands featured in IGBAs

Keywords: Mobile marketing, in-game advertisements, in-game banner ads, mobile games, gamer's attitude, behavioral intention, IGBAs

This study sought to test the impact of advertising values, gameplay conditions and social influence on attitude toward in-game banner advertisements (IGBAs) in mobile games. In addition, the study tested intention to click IGBAs, and preference toward the advertised brand. Newzoo (2018) predicted that the mobile gaming industry will hit USD100 billion by 2021. Although research on mobile marketing has emerged quickly (Shankar & Balasubramanian 2009; Varnali & Toker 2010; Persaud & Azhar 2012), literature on mobile game advertising is still at an early stage (Komulainen et al. 2013; Terlutter & Capella 2013). The shift from desktop to mobile platforms (Gamasutra 2016a) has created many new opportunities in the digital media economy. Today, more than half of consumers have moved from the big screen to mobile devices and are spending more than half of their digital time online (Fulgoni & Lipsman 2014). Over a decade ago, in-game marketing was seen as a vanity play. Today, however, in-game advertising (IGA) has become a vital channel to engage with youthful audiences who are watching less television, have a lower interest in printed media, and are playing more digital games (Precourt 2013). Among the different types of mobile display advertisements, in-game banner ads (IGBAs) are one of the most popular formats, and are used by mobile game giants like Supercell and Rovio.

While measuring consumer attitudes has long been an interest to marketers (Nakanishi & Bettman 1974; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh 2013; Kotler & Armstrong 2015; Schiffman & Kanuk 2014), there is still limited research on the attitudes of mobile gamers to IGA. This omission is significant, since gaming with mobile devices has grown in popularity. Consequently, this study aims to fill the research gap by studying gamers' attitudes to the in-game banner

ad (IGBA), which is a theme of growing importance in digital advertising (Yoo, Kim & Stout 2004; Yoo & Peña 2011; Resnick & Albert 2014; Li, Huang & Bente 2016). In addition, the study identifies preferences shown toward the advertised brand in mobile banner ads. IGBAs coupled with the right playing conditions, can be a very powerful in providing cost-effective, interactive solutions that target young adult consumers.

Specific calls have been made to deepen our understanding of the effect of in-game advertising on behaviours like purchase intention (Hwang et al. 2017), as well as brand-related issues such as the level of brand familiarity, brand attitudes and contextual advertising (Sparks & Chung 2016; Yoo & Eastin 2017). In addition, calls have long been made to improve our understanding of the consequences of advertisement placements for consumer behaviour (Yang et al. 2006) and mobile games (Yeu et al. 2013). While there are many gaps that are yet to be filled in our understanding of IGA, Lewis & Porter (2010) emphatically stated that more research is needed regarding perceived and intended interaction between users and ads, and this was amplified by Turlutter & Capella (2013), who specifically called for more research on behavioural intentions. This study was conducted in South Africa, which was listed by Harvard Business Review as one of the fastest-moving digital economies (Chakravorti et al. 2015; Osiakwan 2017). A report by GSMA (2015)—a leading source of global mobile operating data—indicated that South Africa has the largest mobile market of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and accounts for nearly one-third of total subscribers in the subregion. Of significance is the trend that mobile gaming growth has tracked the growth in smartphone sales, which was expected to double from 22.8 million (2014) to 52.3 million by 2019 (GSMA, 2015). The smartphone and digital boom's direct impact on mobile gaming was further illustrated when Smith and Blignaut (2012) conducted an extensive review of mobile gaming in South Africa, and projected 6.9% growth in mobile gaming (2011–2016). When the study was last repeated in 2015, the forecasts were not only realised, but mobile gaming revenue was set to hit USD175 million by the end of 2019 (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2015). In a developing economy like South Africa, with a population of almost 60 million people, the opportunity for growth is strong (Simpson & Lappeman 2017; Lappeman et al. 2019).

The purpose of the paper is to identify the factors that impact attitudes toward IGBAs, and to further assess the intention to click IGBAs and preference toward the advertised brand. This research measured each of the known attitudinal constructs in marketing literature, in order to test the hypotheses described in the following section.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

Measuring the Effectiveness of Banner Advertising

Since the early days of Internet commerce, there has been much discussion about how the effectiveness or impact of banner advertising should be measured (Manchanda et al. 2006; Robinson, Wysocka & Hand 2007; Park & Ohm 2014; De Haan, Wiesel & Pauwels, 2016). The measures include brand awareness and brand recall after being exposed to the banner, intention to click on the ad, and consumer attitudes toward different aspects of advertising (Moore et al. 2005; Manchanda et al. 2006; Gao et al. 2009; Rosenkrans 2010; Nasir et al. 2011; Kireyev et al. 2016). In prior research, attitude has been measured toward the brand advertised, toward the website the ads were placed on, toward different online advertising formats, and toward different kinds of banner advertisements regarding content and design (Lohtia et al. 2003; Burns & Lutz 2006; Moore et al. 2005; Manchanda et al. 2006; Gao et al. 2009; Rosenkrans 2010; Nasir et al. 2011; Wojdyski & Evans 2016; Ansari & Riasi 2016).

Attitude Toward Advertising

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) defines the links between beliefs, attitudes, norms, intentions, and behaviours of individuals. Attitude is expressed by a person's psychological evaluative response showing some degree of favourability or unfavourability (Azjen & Fishbein 2005; Schiffman & Kanuk 2014), which triggers a positive or negative response (Durvasula et al. 2001). In the case of a positive attitude, consumers are twice as likely to be persuaded (Biel & Bridwater 1990). Some studies have shown the link between consumer attitudes toward advertising and their behavioural responses (Karson et al. 2006; Edwards et al. 2002; Shaouf, Lü & Li 2016). Past studies have shown there are positive associations between attitude toward the ads and brand attitude, brand choice, and purchase

intention (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Brown & Stayman 1992; Lin 2014; Van-Tien Dao et al. 2014). Bill (1999) found that consumers who had clicked on specific banner ads had more favourable attitudes toward the banner ad and higher purchase intentions than they did for unclicked banner ads. With the emergence of new advertising platforms—such as those embedded within mobile games, social media, and mixed reality—together with the constant change in consumer behaviour and attitudes, there have been demands that research evaluates how these have impacted the effectiveness of advertisements. As such, the efficacy and optimisation of new advertising platforms and formats need to be researched (Stipp, 2016).

Measurement of Effectiveness

Despite the popularity of mobile games, only five percent of players are spending money (Dmasper 2017). According to statistics produced by BigFishGames (2017), 48% of gamers play social games, 36% of games are played on smartphones, 54% of gamers play with others and they spent an average of 6.5 hours per week playing online with others, mainly friends (40%) and 4.5 hours physically with another person. These statistics inspired the authors to develop a model that measures the effectiveness of an IGBA in two aspects:

- Intention to Click an IGBA
- Brand Preference

Intention to Click on an IGBA

For assessing the effectiveness of banner ads in an Internet context, one of the most commonly used metrics is the click-through rate (Manchanda et al. 2006; Kireyev et al. 2016; Shan et al. 2016). Fulgoni and Lipsman (2014) found that despite only a 0.1% click rate, display ads could successfully increase retailer sales. Thus, the click-through rate is a good measurement for the effectiveness of IGBAs (Zhang & Mao, 2016).

According to the theory of reasoned actions developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), favourable attitudes may lead to strong intentions to engage in the behaviour in question. Numerous prior studies have confirmed the linkage between attitudes and intentions. Tsang et al. (2004) found that attitude toward mobile advertisements is positively related to the intention to receive mobile ads such as Short Messaging Services (SMS). Several other studies also concluded that positive attitudes affect the intention to use the contents in mobile advertisements (Lee et al. 2006; Xu 2006; Altuna & Konuk 2009). Thus, we suggest that if a consumer has a favourable attitude toward the IGBA in the mobile game, it can influence his or her intention to click on the IGBA. As such, the following hypothesis was developed:

H_1 : A gamer's favourable attitude toward an IGBA leads to a positive intention to click on a mobile IGBA.

Brand Preference

In addition to clicking on the IGBA, the mobile gamer may develop preferences toward the brand advertised. Such behaviour can also be used as a metric to measure the effectiveness of the IGBA. Thus, we add the construct of brand preference to this research framework, as a measurement of effectiveness, in addition to intention to click. Brand advertising has been in existence since the birth of motion pictures in the mid-1890s (Newell & Salmon 2003). Briggs & Hollis (1997) indicated that banner advertisements might affect intention to use, attitudes, and brand preference. With the development of technologies and new media, these ads are no longer limited to the big screen or television, and also appear in video and digital games (Nelson et al. 2004; Glass 2007; Marchanda & Hennig-Thurau 2013). It was also found that consumers who accept mobile ads and have positive attitudes toward the mobile ad itself, would also have a positive preference toward the brand and products (Yu 2013). Gupta et al. (2010) suggest that a positive attitude toward a brand generates a positive response from customers. Cho et al. (2014) also found that a favourable attitude toward the ad's content increased the favourable attitude toward the brand. As such, we hypothesise that:

H_2 : A gamer's favourable attitude to an IGBA leads to a positive preference for the brand advertised in the IGBA.

Advertising Values and Mobile Gamers' Attitudes

Advertisement value refers to the overall representation of the worth of advertising to consumers (Ducoffe, 1995). There are three perceived advertising values suggested by Ducoffe (1996) that shape the attitudes of consumers toward advertisements: informativeness, entertainment, and irritation. These values have been found to be important in affecting attitudes in many prior research studies. For example, Burns and Lutz (2006) found positive relations between attitudes toward various online advertising formats—such as banner ads, pop-up ads, and floating ads—and click-through. Other earlier research has also found that credibility has a significant impact on the perceived values of online advertising and attitudes toward it (Cho & Cheon 2004; Nasir et al. 2011; Van-Tien Dao et al. 2014). Consequently, we use irritation, entertainment, informativeness, and credibility to conceptualise perceived values in this paper.

Irritation refers to the extent of displeasure an ad causes if it distracts the attention of a person or increases his or her anxiety (Bauer & Greyser 1968; Ducoffe 1996). According to Ducoffe (1995 1996), irritation has a negative relationship with attitude toward ads. In other words, the level of an ad's effectiveness will reduce with an increasing level of irritation. Gao et al. (2004) found that the level of irritation had a strong negative correlation with the attitudes to the website it was on. In addition, ads that interfere with the tasks that a consumer is performing are irritating and they are unlikely to click on them (Cho & Cheon 2004). In the online environment, advertisements that are unexpected and interrupt the user, such as pop-ups and floating advertisements, are perceived to be the worst type (Burns & Lutz 2006; Cho & Cheon 2004). Mobile gamers usually appreciate advertisements that add realism to the game, do not interrupt game play, and which are subtle (Nelson et al. 2004; Tangmanee & Rustanavibul 2012; Winkler & Buckner 2006). However, banner advertising, which usually occupies a large part of the screen on a mobile device, might be seen to be interrupting a mobile game and consequently irritate the gamer. As a result, we hypothesise that:

H₃: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is negatively affected by irritation caused by it.

Entertainment refers to the extent to which consumers perceive viewing an ad as being enjoyable, pleasurable, and entertaining (Ducoffe 1996). Bauer et al. (2005) found that consumers perceived that the entertainment utility of mobile marketing has a positive influence on their perceptions of the overall utility of mobile marketing, which in turn has a positive impact on their attitude toward mobile marketing. Many researchers have found that entertainment value has a vital impact on attitudes toward mobile and online advertising (Altuna & Konuk 2009; Bauer et al. 2005; Burns & Lutz 2006; Ducoffe 1996; Choi et al. 2008). Rosenkrans (2009) found that click-through rates for various online rich-media advertisements increased if the advertisements were distinctive and creative. Tsang et al. (2004) and Choi et al. (2008) found that entertainment is the most significant factor affecting attitudes toward mobile marketing messages. As such, we hypothesise that:

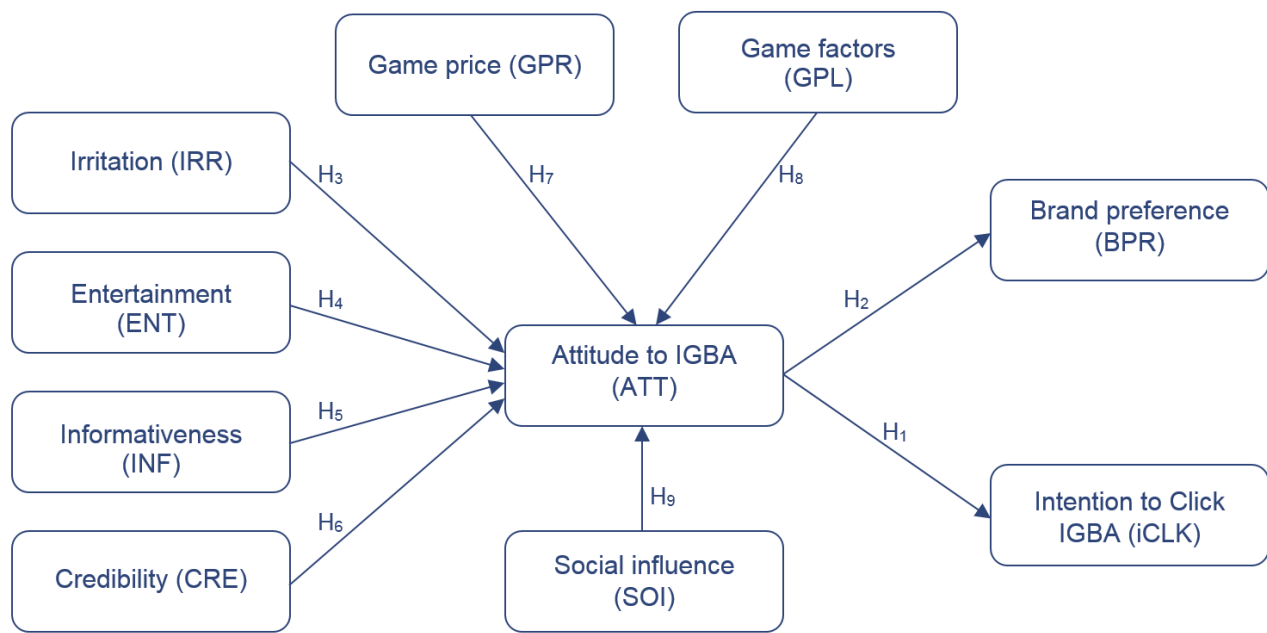
H₄: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is positively affected by its entertainment value.

Informativeness refers to the extent to which consumers perceive an ad as providing useful and relevant information to them (Ducoffe 1996). Informative advertisements are known to engender a positive view (Goodrich et al. 2015) and are affected by factors like accuracy, timelines (Bloom & Krips 1982; Rubin 2002), and automatic access to information (Zabadi et al. 2012; Kaasinen 2003). It has also been shown that information-seeking behavior acts as a positive predictor for the formation of the consumer's attitude toward online advertising (Ducoffe 1996; Wang et al. 2009). Chi et al. (2012) state that if a banner advertisement provides detailed product information, the advertising effectiveness will be higher than that of non-informative banners. The same issue about the importance of informativeness applies to mobile advertising. Tsang et al. (2004) found informativeness to be the second most significant factor in the acceptance of permission-based mobile marketing. Thus, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H₅: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is positively affected by the perceived informativeness of the IGBA.

Existing research has also identified credibility as having a significant influence on producing more favourable attitudes to online advertising (Nasir et al., 2011). In the context of advertising, this refers to the consumer's general perception of the truthfulness, reliability, trustworthiness, and believability of an advertisement (MacKenzie & Lutz

FIGURE 1
THE DEVELOPED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



1989). Credibility has been found to be an important factor affecting consumer attitudes to mobile marketing messages (Choi et al. 2008; Tsang et al. 2004). Thus, delivering credible messages and establishing consumer trust are vital in mobile marketing. When an ad is received from an advertiser with a good reputation, the recipient is more likely to believe that the advertiser has high expertise in a product category, as otherwise they would not show such opportunistic behaviour toward consumers (Rousseau et al. 1998; Cho et al. 2014). Moreover, consumers are more comfortable engaging in mobile marketing with a brand they already have prior (positive) experience of and that they trust (Persaud & Azhar 2012). Therefore, we hypothesise that:

H₆: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is positively affected by the credibility of its source.

Mobile game factors

The price of the mobile games can have an influence on whether advertisements in games are accepted or not, and thus the attitude of the gamers toward IGBAs. One of the most common reasons for supporting in-game ads is that they lower the costs of the game or support better game development (Chambers 2005; Nelson et al. 2004.) Advergaming is often seen positively for similar reasons. In return for watching an ad before the game or allowing brand product placement within a game, consumers can download the mobile game for free or play it free online (Choi et al. 2008; Redondo 2012). A gamer's most common concern is the congruency of the ads with the gaming context. It was found that gamers might reject the advertised brand if it is advertised in an irrelevant context to the game or their needs (Chambers 2005). As such, we hypothesise that:

H₇: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is positively affected by the lower price of the mobile game.

Game involvement refers to the amount of attention that is given to IGA. The immersion of the mobile gamers in the tasks and activities involved in the games' environment may captivate their attention, which in turn affects their ability to recall the content or brand advertised. According to the "limited capacity model of motivated mediated message processing" (Lang 2009), an individual has a limited capacity to process information when they are oversaturated with the stimulus. As a result, their ability to recall (Lee & Faber 2007) and intention to act (Lin 2014) will decrease. This limitation may be observed when the mobile gamer's main concentration during the gameplay session is focused on playing the game. As a result, they may face difficulties in recalling the contents or the brand advertised in the IGBAs.

Lee & Faber (2007) found that advertised brands in games with moderate involvement played by gamers with high gaming experience, are better recognised than games that require deep involvement. As such, we hypothesise that:

H₈: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is positively affected by his or her involvement in the mobile game.

Social Influence

Social norms are the foundation of culture and social interaction. They act as a powerful and influential pressure on an individual belonging to or seeking acceptance within a group. Social influence refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform certain behaviour. A social norm is an expectation about appropriate behaviour in a social context (Sherif & Sherif 1953) and reflects the "group standards" in one or more groups (e.g. family, friends, colleagues) (McDonald & Crandall 2015). With the possibility to connect to the Internet at much lower costs today, there is an increasing number of gamers playing multi-player games using mobile devices (Gamasutra 2016b). In addition, it is common for gamers to share information with other gamers or social groups, even if they are playing a single-player mobile game. As such, the attitude of the gamer toward IGBAs and their intention to click or their intention to use the advertised brand, may be influenced by the expectations or perceptions of their peers, gaming companions, or significant others who are perceived as being important in the gaming environment and culture. As a result, we hypothesise that:

H₉: The gamer's attitude to a mobile IGBA is positively affected by the perception of significant others.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

Since young adults are growing significantly as mobile gamers, the survey was primarily conducted among respondents under the age of thirty. To encourage responses, small lucky draw prizes were offered. The scale items (Appendix A) used to measure the proposed constructs (irritation, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and attitude) were adapted from the literature (Ducoffe 1996; Tsang et al. 2004; Altuna & Konuk 2009; Komulainen et al. 2013) to fit the context of IGBAs. All items related to the constructs other than demographic information were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Respondents were asked to rate their opinion – ranging from strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1).

A total of 610 questionnaires were distributed and 556 responses were collected; 130 responses were removed from our analysis because the respondents indicated they did not play mobile games. Of the 426 respondents who played mobile games, 235 were male and 191 were female. Of those, 84.7% (361 respondents) were aged 16 to 35. A smartphone was the most popular device for mobile games, with 380 respondents (89.2%) responding that they play mobile games using a smartphone. One hundred eighty three respondents (43%) indicated that they play mobile games with a tablet, and 21 said that they play with a classic phone. Note that this question allowed a respondent to select more than one device with which to play mobile games. Three hundred and nine respondents (72.5%) replied that they play mobile games to kill or pass time, and 275 respondents (64.6%) see mobile games as a form of entertainment. Two hundred forty four respondents (57.4%) responded that they play when taking a break and 155 (36.4%) said that they play as a way to relax. There are also responses indicating that mobile games are used for socialising with friends (32), bonding with children and family (23), and advancing to other levels in the games (86). Again, this question allowed the respondents to pick more than one answer.

The analysis used the partial least squares (PLS) approach using SmartPLS software (Ringle et al. 2005). A rule of thumb for the required sample size in PLS is that the sample should be at least ten times that of the most complicated multiple regressions in the model (Barclay et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2011). The sample size here fulfills this criterion well.

We followed Gefen and Straub's (2005) procedure to test convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity indicates the extent to which items on a scale that are theoretically related are actually related in reality. We evaluated the convergent validity by examining item loadings, composite reliabilities, and average variance extracted (AVE)

TABLE 1
ITEM MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SDS), LOADINGS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS

CONSTRUCT	ITEM	CR	AVE	LOADING	P VALUE
Attitude (ATT)	ATT1	0.95	0.83	0.93	<0.001
	ATT2			0.95	<0.001
	ATT3			0.94	<0.001
	ATT4			0.81	<0.001
Brand Preference (BPR)	BPR1	0.96	0.87	0.92	<0.001
	BPR2			0.95	<0.001
	BPR3			0.91	<0.001
	BPR4			0.95	<0.001
Entertainment (ENT)	ENT1	0.96	0.84	0.90	<0.001
	ENT2			0.94	<0.001
	ENT3			0.93	<0.001
	ENT4			0.91	<0.001
	ENT5			0.90	<0.001
Credibility (CRE)	CRE1	0.89	0.67	0.79	<0.001
	CRE2			0.87	<0.001
	CRE3			0.80	<0.001
	CRE4			0.80	<0.001
Game Play (GPL)	GPL1	0.92	0.71	0.86	<0.001
	GPL2			0.82	<0.001
	GPL3			0.86	<0.001
	GPL4			0.85	<0.001
	GPL5			0.83	<0.001
Game Price (GPR)	GPR1	0.84	0.65	0.83	<0.001
	GPR2			0.70	<0.001
	GPR5			0.87	<0.001
Informativeness (INF)	INF1	0.91	0.72	0.83	<0.001
	INF2			0.84	<0.001
	INF3			0.87	<0.001
	INF4			0.87	<0.001
Intention to Click (iCLK)	iCLK1	0.92	0.74	0.85	<0.001
	iCLK2			0.92	<0.001
	iCLK3			0.86	<0.001
	iCLK4			0.80	<0.001
Irritation (IRR)	IRR1	0.76	0.52	0.85	<0.001
	*IRR2			0.52	<0.001
	IRR3			0.64	<0.001
	IRR4			0.65	<0.001
Social Influence (SOI)	SOI1	0.92	0.80	0.88	<0.001
	SOI2			0.93	<0.001
	SOI3			0.88	<0.001

Note: Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), * Items were removed due to loadings less than 0.70

values. With regard to item loadings, Fornell and Larcker (1981) have recommended that values of at least 0.7 are acceptable. One item (IRR2) from irritation had a loading of 0.52, and this item was thus removed. Two other items (IRR3 and IRR4) from irritation also had slightly lower item loadings than the threshold 0.7. As these values were just below

the threshold, we decided to retain them. Composite reliabilities of above 0.8 and AVE values exceeding 0.5 further support satisfactory convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker 1981). The loadings, CRs, and AVE values are shown in Table 1.

Discriminant validity refers to whether the items measure the construct in question or other (related) constructs (Gefen & Straub 2005). We evaluated the discriminant validity by comparing the square roots of the AVE values to the inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker 1981). Table 2 shows the correlation matrix with the square root of the AVE values presented diagonally. As can be seen from the table, the square roots of the AVE values for the variables are consistently greater than the off-diagonal correlation values – suggesting satisfactory discriminant

TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LATENT VARIABLES

	ATT	BPR	CRE	ENT	GPL	GPR	INF	iCLK	IRR	SOI
Attitude (ATT)	0.91									
Brand preference (BPR)	0.55	0.93								
Credibility (CRE)	0.59	0.62	0.82							
Entertainment (ENT)	0.58	0.52	0.62	0.92						
Game Play (GPL)	0.60	0.37	0.38	0.39	0.84					
Game Price (GPR)	0.51	0.39	0.39	0.32	0.42	0.81				
Informativeness (INF)	0.45	0.49	0.61	0.55	0.27	0.31	0.85			
Intention to Click (iCLK)	0.62	0.57	0.64	0.63	0.41	0.28	0.49	0.86		
Irritation (IRR)	-0.48	-0.27	-0.36	-0.32	-0.35	-0.32	-0.26	-0.32	0.72	
Social Influence (SOI)	0.44	0.44	0.47	0.40	0.25	0.26	0.28	0.44	-0.29	0.89

Note: the square roots of the AVE values are shown on the main diagonal

validity between the variables.

We further verified discriminant validity by examining item cross-loadings. The results of this analysis are presented in Appendix B. All items load higher on their assigned latent construct than on any other construct (Fornell & Larcker 1981). This indicates that discriminant validity at the item level is met for all the constructs (Gefen & Straub 2005).

Having verified the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement, we addressed the potential concern of common method bias (CMB) (Podsakoff & Organ 1986). To evaluate the risk that CMB remained, we conducted Harman's (1976) one-factor test. A principal component analysis indicated that no single construct accounted for a majority of the total variance. It could thus be concluded that CMB is unlikely to have distorted the interpretations.

RESULTS

The test of the structural model includes estimates of the path coefficients, which indicate the strengths of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables, and the R^2 values, which represent the amount of variance explained in the dependent variables. Figure 2 shows the results of the structural model test.

The data offered support for eight out of the nine hypotheses in our proposed research model. The summary of the hypotheses test results is shown in Table 3.

In line with earlier studies, attitude ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$) had a significant effect on intention to click (Nasir et al. 2011; Fulgoni & Lipsman 2014). Thus, H_1 was supported. H_2 was supported as attitude ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$) had a significant influence on brand preference (Briggs & Hollis 1997; Cho et al. 2014). Irritation ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.001$), entertainment ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$), and credibility ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$) all had significant effects on attitude, thus supporting H_3 , H_4 , and H_6 . Irritation has a significant negative effect, while entertainment and credibility have significant positive impacts on the gamer's attitude to IGBAs. This is in line with previous studies (Ducoffe 1996; Gao 2004; Tangmanee & Rustanavibul 2012; Altuna & Konuk 2009; Tsang et al. 2004). Contrary to earlier research (Goodrich et al. 2015; Tsang et al. 2004; Ducoffe 1996), H_5 was not supported, as informativeness ($\beta = 0.04$, n.s.) had a non-

FIGURE 2
THE RESULTS OF THE STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL

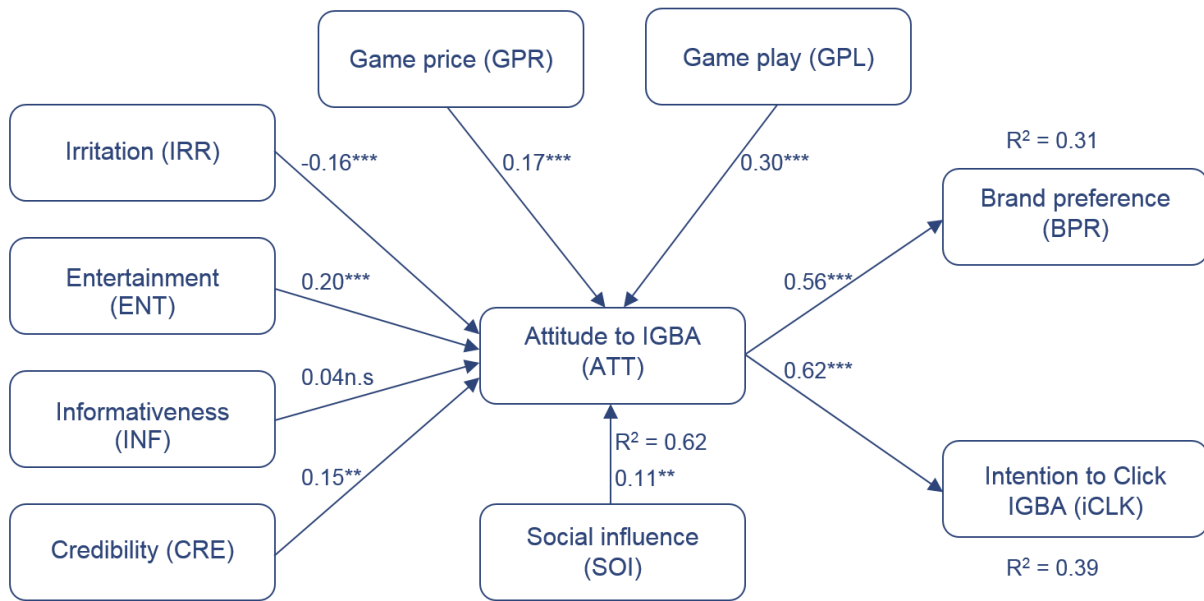


TABLE 3
THE RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	p value	Hypothesis test result
H1: ATT-iCLK	0.62	<0.001	Supported
H2: ATT-BPR	0.56	<0.001	Supported
H3: IRR-ATT	0.16	<0.001	Supported
H4: ENT-ATT	0.20	<0.001	Supported
H5: INF-ATT	0.04	Not significant	Not supported
H6: CRE-ATT	0.15	<0.01	Supported
H7: GPR-ATT	0.17	<0.001	Supported
H8: GPL-ATT	0.30	<0.001	Supported
H9: SOI-ATT	0.11	<0.01	Supported

significant effect on attitude. Game play ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$), game price ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$), and social influence ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$) also all had significant effects on attitude – supporting H_7 , H_8 , and H_9 . Our proposed model explained 62% of variances in attitude, 39% of variances in intention to click, and 31% of variances in brand preference.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

The results contribute to the mobile advertising literature on understanding the factors affecting the effectiveness of IGBAs. We investigated the attitudes, intention to click, and brand preference of mobile gamers toward IGBAs, since ultimately it is the consumer's acceptance and use of advertising that determines its effectiveness. Our study validates and extends the findings of prior research. In particular, we describe five theoretical contributions based on our study findings.

First, and consistent with earlier research (Tsang et al. 2004; Ducoffe 1996), we found that attitude had a strong influence on both intention to click and brand preference with regard to IGBAs. These findings validate the findings

of prior studies that found a favourable attitude leads to intention to click (Nasir et al. 2011; Fulgoni & Lipsman 2014) and influences brand preferences (Briggs & Hollis 1997; Cho et al. 2014).

Second, entertainment value has a positive influence on mobile gamers' attitudes toward IGBAs. This finding is consistent with many earlier studies, which suggest that banner ads in the digital and interactive environment should be creative, entertaining and have an emotional appeal to targets (Hadija et al. 2012; Ashmawy & Sahn, 2014). Mobile gamers consider mobile devices to be a form of entertainment vehicle. This may explain why an entertaining advertisement may attract and amuse them more effectively in terms of generating curiosity to click on the ads (Ling et al. 2010; Hadija et al. 2012). The result suggests that when the IGBA is enriched with entertainment contexts and more interactive aspects, it will result in a more positive attitude of the mobile gamer to the IGBAs than plain ones.

Third, we found that social influence had a positive influence on the gamer's attitude toward IGBAs. This is not surprising when casual mobile gamers play with others – especially friends (Gamasutra 2016b). As such, there is likely influence from the social circle consisting of other gamers who may have expectations to behave in similar ways (McDonald & Crandall 2015).

Fourth, in contrast to prior research (Ducoffe 1996; Tsang et al. 2004), we found that informativeness had no influence on the gamer's attitude to IGBAs. There could be a few explanations for this outcome. The gamers' main task is to play; thus, the depth of information content on the IGBA is unimportant in this context in comparison to an online banner where the screen size is bigger. Also, an IGBA is designed to attract the casual gamer to click, and not read.

Finally, we found that both factors related to game factors (i.e. lower price and game play) had significant influences on the gamer's attitude to IGBAs. As long as the IGBA is not affecting the gamer's experience, the result suggests that the presence of an IGBA will have insignificant impact on the gamer's attitude toward an IGBA. Another explanation might be that about 60% of mobile games are typically played by casual players (Delta DNA 2016). They play mobile games to kill time and the play time is usually short. As such, they may feel less irritated by the presence of IGBAs or may even stop the gameplay to click on them to explore something relevant or more interesting if it offers more value to pass the time. According to Bhave et al. (2013), users prefer to click an IGBA that opens upon clicking, rather than directing them to another page so that they can continue to play after clicking on the ad. This may also explain the high response rate to click an IGBA, if a reward is offered in the IGBA according to the responses received in this study.

The model developed in this study is the first of its kind to study the influence of social influence and game conditions on mobile gamers' attitudes toward IGBAs. In addition, the study builds on a small base of research that explores the impact of attitude on IGBAs and the gamer's intention to click or the gamer's intention to choose the advertised brands over other brands.

Managerial Implications

The managerial implications of this study are six-fold. The results reveal which factors contribute to the effectiveness of this new form of advertising and how that effectiveness could be enhanced.

Firstly, the gamer's attitude to IGBAs is positively influenced by the entertainment value of the IGBA. Thus, marketers may consider enriching the entertainment value of IGBAs with more creativity – such as animated words, graphics, and interactive links that are more appealing (Lohtia et al. 2003; Rosenkrans 2009; Chi et al. 2012).

Secondly, the informativeness value seems to have an insignificant impact on gamers' attitudes toward IGBAs, given that searching for information is not an objective of game playing. In addition, the screen size on a mobile device is significantly smaller than that of a television or computer screen, meaning that the amount of information that can be presented effectively in smaller banner ads is limited. This means that marketers should reduce the text or information presented in the IGBAs, keeping the contents simple, and they should enrich the entertainment value – as suggested earlier in the subsection.

Thirdly, the game price has a positive impact on the gamer's attitude and thus their intention to click or their

likelihood to show preference toward the advertised brand. Gamers believe the IGBAs are acceptable in low-cost or free mobile games, because this is a way to support the game development. Also, some believe the revenue from ads can support the development of better game content and features. As such, marketers should consider IGBAs for free-to-play games, as these are more effective than advertising in purchased mobile games.

Fourthly, game involvement also affects the attitudes of the gamers positively. When gamers are very focused on a mobile game and deeply involved, their attitude, intention to click, and recall of the advertised brand as a choice is less effective. As such, it is wise for marketers to choose mobile games that are slower paced and those that require moderate involvement, so that the gamers will enjoy the mobile game but still have some spare capacity for the IGBAs that are shown during the gameplay session.

Fifthly, a favourable attitude toward an IGBA leads to a positive intention to click on a mobile IGBA and also the gamer's preference toward the brand presented in the IGBA. This is an important finding, because it has empirically demonstrated that an IGBA is not seen as irritation or is unwelcomed. Casual gamers in the mobile games context might click if the IGBA does not affect their gaming experience, and is enriched with entertainment values. The results also show that the gamer may show preference to the brand presented in the IGBA. The explanation might be the acceptance of advertisements so that they can play free or pay only a low price to satisfy their entertainment needs.

Finally, the reduction of Internet costs coupled with the social capabilities of mobile devices and games have had a positive effect on social influence on brand preference and intention to click on an IGBA. As such, it is important for marketers to create IGBA content that is eye-catching and entertaining, so that mobile gamers are encouraged to share and discuss the ad and thus increase the rate of clicking and the awareness of the brand advertised.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any other empirical research, the present study is subject to a number of limitations. Some of the limitations can however be avenues for future research. First, the study was conducted among younger South Africans. This evidently limits generalisation of the findings directly to other user groups. Moreover, we relied on self-reported constructs. Hence, to overcome the well-known issues related to self-reported data and to increase the generalisability of the findings, future research in other user populations that also employs objective measures of usage, such as log data, is needed. Second, this study does not consider participants' characteristics. According to Myhill (2002), individual differences can significantly affect users' attitudes. Third, modern mobile technology offers various opportunities for advertising, and, consequently, there has been a rapid shift from mere message advertising to various formats (e.g. in-app messages) and mixed reality mobile games (e.g. Pokemon Go). Finally, our research focuses on the effectiveness of IGBAs and therefore leaves the field open for further studies on the effectiveness of other forms of advertising in mobile games, in addition to the IGBA (e.g. mobile video ads), and also the context influences of advertising (e.g. physical ambience, location, weather, incentive).

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Measuring consumers' affective attitudes to debt and savings in South Africa using self-assessment manikins

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ABSTRACT

It has been widely reported that South African households are burdened by excessively high levels of debt and, at times, negative savings rates. Debt and savings directly impact, not only on the lives of consumers, but also on key sectors such as the retail sector including consumers' readiness to buy on credit or to save for future purchases. Attitudes towards debts and savings play a major role in determining behaviour that could address the problems associated with high debt levels and negative savings rates. The question arises as to whether an analysis of consumer attitudes to debt and savings, particularly from an emotional or affective perspective, can provide insight that might be useful in changing debt and savings behaviour amongst South African consumers. This article reports on a study that measured the emotional valence of South African consumers' attitudes towards debt and savings, using Self-Assessment Manikins (SAM) in an online survey of 886 respondents. A generally positive emotional valence to savings and a generally negative emotional valence to debt were found, pointing towards extraneous drivers rather than attitudinal drivers of indebtedness.

Keywords: emotion, attitudes, valence, self-assessment manikins, savings, debt

This article is about debt and savings, and the affective attitude South African consumers have towards their debt and savings. The article was distilled from research within the retail banking sector to determine attitudes to savings and debt. It begins by examining the role of debt and savings from the context of both the consumer and the economy as a whole. The focus then turns to debt and savings in a South African context, highlighting the debilitating consequences of high levels of debt and negative savings. Given these consequences, the argument is proffered that understanding individual consumer attitudes to debt and savings, especially from an emotional perspective, could help retail banks to develop actions to help consumers better manage their debt and increase savings, which, in turn, would address national growth imperatives. To achieve this the self-assessment manikin is employed in a survey of 886 respondents in an attempt to distill affective attitudes towards debt and savings.

DEBT AND SAVINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The discussion below first examines debt in South Africa, followed by savings.

Debt in South Africa

The 2007-2010 United States (US) subprime mortgage crises evolved into a financial calamity that negatively affected many economies in the world (Duca 2013), including South Africa. It was afterwards widely referred to as the "global financial crisis" (Mishkin 2010:1). At the beginning of the financial crisis, South Africa experienced a significant increase in its household debt-to-income ratio, reaching 86.4% (Trading Economics 2017). This has subsequently

decreased to approximately 74.4% in 2016, which remains high, but is somewhat lower than most other developed countries with household debt-to-income ratios often over 100% (Trading Economics 2017). The household debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio is 35.3%, which is also quite low when compared with nations such as Switzerland (128.2%), Australia (123.1%), the United Kingdom (87.6%), and China (43.2%) (Trading Economics 2017). The reality is that most developed nations have a household debt to GDP ratio higher than South Africa. The drop in household debt in South Africa (from 86.4% in 2008 to 74.4% in 2016) can arguably be ascribed to the timeous introduction of the National Credit Act in 2008 which contributed to putting the brake on debt in a restrictive global climate at the time.

However, if one turns away from the national accounts, a different picture appears. A recent report compiled by the National Credit Regulator in South Africa highlighted the fact that there were R1.66 trillion outstanding consumer credit in 2016 (an increase of 2.3% from 2015) and 23.9 million active credit consumers. Furthermore, 75% of South African consumers owed approximately 75% of their salaries to creditors, 20.2 million had impaired accounts¹ (59.4% of the adult population²), and 86% of consumers borrowed money in 2013/14 (People's Assembly 2016). Makhaola (2016) confirms this negative debt environment in reporting that "South Africans [are] drowning in debt". However, Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2016) ask the question whether indebted South Africans are showing resilience, by pointing to the declining debt-to-income ratio referred to in the previous paragraph. StatsSA also point to the decline in summons issued in respect of debt, as well as the decline in defaulting debtors, even though the value of the bad debt had increased by 7.2% from 2014 to 2015 (StatsSA 2016).

Although the country's overall level of household debt appears to have been decreasing, consumers are still failing to save (Henderson 2017). This is of concern for South Africa, especially in the context of the low economic growth environment where consumers are overstretched and unable to meet their commitments without savings and investments ([Ssebagala 2016] – savings in South Africa will be examined in more detail later in this section). Slowing growth rates for South Africa will, in addition, put further strain on South African households, arguably encouraging the uptake of further debt.

It is well documented that household debt in South Africa has increased rapidly due to, amongst other factors, credit uptake, household borrowing, unsecured loans and interest rate hikes. (Meniago, Mukuddem-Petersen, & Mongale 2013; Mutezo, 2014). In addition, the need for instant gratification and materialism, a trend evident globally, has also burdened local consumers thereby pressuring them to increase their debt levels. It should also be borne in mind that the use of debt presents the consumer with the opportunity to consume now with the view that the income earned at a later stage will be sufficient to settle the outstanding debts and interest payments

The annual 2016 Finscope survey, incorporating an analysis of financial services in South Africa which is supported by many of the larger financial institutions in the country, revealed that 47% of South African adults were borrowing from various sources "to supplement their limited resources" (Finscope 2016:9). The reasons provided for borrowing were to pay for food and for emergencies (47%), for transportation (11%), for housing investments (11%), to pay for bills (9%) and for education (9%). In contrast, the reasons for not borrowing were that respondents did not want to have debt (39%), they did not have a job (29%), they could not afford to borrow (20%), and the interest charged on borrowing was too high (12%) (Finscope 2016:9).

Savings in South Africa

As far as household savings are concerned, statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reveal that South Africa's consumer savings are in the negative and amongst the worst in the world (OECD 2016). This view is supported by a recent study by MyTreasury which highlights the fact that the South African household savings rate comes last when ranked against G20 countries (MyTreasury 2018). Orthofer (2016:1) elaborates on this fact by pointing out that South

African household savings rates have been declining steadily over the past five decades "to almost nothing today". The author points out that "household savings rates have been in 'negative territory for almost a decade"

1. An impaired account is different from an impaired credit record, referred to earlier in the paragraph.
2. Own calculation using StatsSA data - <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022015.pdf>

(Orthofer 2016:1). This view is supported by the MyTreasury report which puts South Africa's savings rate at close to zero (MyTreasury 2018). The implication is that households and individuals are living on credit (or at least that the debt that they have is cancelling out any savings they might make) and are thus unable to fund new investment, translating into a tense time for households and individuals.

The negative savings rate evident from the statistics outlined above mean that South Africans are spending more than they are earning, resulting in dissaving. Prinsloo (2002:73) points out that "Generally speaking, an inverse relationship can be expected between increase in the utilisation of consumer credit [i.e. debt] and the saving of private households [i.e. savings] over time". In other words, the less consumers save, the more they may be inclined to take on debt, especially in a case such as South Africa where consumers are already in negative or zero territory with their savings.

The Association for Savings and Investments in South Africa (ASISA– [2016]) points out that the problem is especially pertinent to the lower income brackets of which there is a substantial number in South Africa. The question of inequality in income is reflected in the Gini coefficient which indicates that South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world with a coefficient of 0.66. With an unemployment rate of 27.3% (World Bank 2017) and the percentage of population living below the poverty line standing at 54% (Grant 2015), it is not surprising that South Africans are not in a position to save and need to turn to debt to survive. Furthermore, South Africa's low savings levels have been identified as an important constraint for investment, both locally and internationally (Eyraud, 2009: 11).

The annual Finscope report (2016:8) revealed that by far the largest percentage of adult consumers were not saving any of their disposable income (63%). The main reasons provided for not having a formalised form of saving, were that they respondents had no job (38%), never thought about it (28%), have no spare money to save (22%), and found saving too expensive (13%) (Finscope 2016:8).

Although the report by the National Credit Regulator, mentioned earlier, 'paints a bleak picture', the national figures combined with the findings from the survey by Finscope (as well as the view of StatsSA) together suggest that debt behaviour in South Africa is not as bad as one might expect in a country with high unemployment and low growth. With 53% of adult respondents not borrowing (according to the Finscope survey), this is surely a good thing. On the savings side, however, South Africa is not doing nearly as well. In fact, consumers are not saving at all – they are dissaving. This is a worrisome situation. From a national perspective, there is clearly a need to change savings behaviour in South Africa. Reducing or limiting debt uptake would also be a good national imperative within reason (as some debt is arguably necessary to 'lubricate' consumer lifestyles in the modern era). These shortcomings must have an impact on the individual consumer psyche. If one has no savings to turn to in order to offset hard times or unexpected expenses, or one has to face the daily burden of debt, this may arguably influence the psyche, attitudes and emotions of consumers negatively. A negative psyche has its own negative implications for the individual and for the nation as a whole.

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

In the above discussion that provided a context to this study, the need to change behaviour has been emphasised. In this section, the discussion turns to the role of attitudes and their influence on behaviour, and more specifically the affective part of attitude as a key driver of behaviour. The literature on attitudes, their link to behaviour and their measurement, is multifaceted and broad. The discussion below strives to capture only the essence of this literature to support (a) the link between attitudes and behaviour, (b) the measurement of attitudes, and (c) the role of emotion (representing the affective component of attitudes) in attitude measurement.

The link between attitudes and behaviour

In this section, the focus turns to the role of attitudes in influencing behavioural change. The argument being that, if one wishes to change behaviour, understanding attitudes and their affective drivers makes sense. An attitude can be defined as a favourable or unfavourable evaluation (cognition), emotion (affective) or action (behavioural) towards something or someone (i.e. an object or stimulus of some kind) (Boone & Kurtz 2004; Asiegbu, Powei & Iruka 2012).³

This definition relates to the ABC model of attitudes often mentioned in the literature (ref)

As far as the link between attitude and behaviour is concerned, the academic literature is replete with articles that examine the link between attitudes and behaviour. A search on Scopus alone,⁴ reveals some 149 000 articles containing these two keywords. Within this research, there has been considerable debate over the years as to whether attitudes influence behaviour or not. Although there has been a general belief that attitudes directly influence behaviour, early authors such as LaPierre (1934), Wicker (1969) and Mostyn (1978) have highlighted attitude-behaviour inconsistency. Subsequently, however, a meta-analysis of 88 previous studies that examined the attitudinal drivers of behaviour, undertaken by Kraus (1995), suggested that “attitudes significantly and substantially predict behavior”. The debate has continued and today one might cautiously argue, based on the extant research, that a link between attitude and behaviour does indeed exist, but that this link is confounded by many variables such as external factors (e.g. demographics, personal traits), behavioural control, behavioural intention, normative beliefs, and whether the attitude is implicit or explicit (Bohner & Schwarz 2001, Pease & Flood 2008; Sniehotta, Pesseau & Araújo-Soares 2015, Crano & Prislín 2008:10; Bohner & Dickel 2011; Barnes 2013:8–9; Murima 2013; Myers 2013; Kiriakidis 2015:40; Maio & Haddock 2015:67–100). Even environmental factors such as temperature have been argued to impact on bodily states and thereby on attitudes (Bohner & Dickel 2011:411).

Measuring attitudes

Attitude measurement is a vexing problem and it would be an arduous exercise to summarise the extensive literature that exists on this topic. Thurstone and Chave (1929) were amongst the first researchers to publish on the topic of attitude measurement. This was followed by a stream of research around this topic in the 1960s and 1970s with authors such as Fishbein (1967), Likert 1967 and Allport 1967 all grappling with the challenge, more or less at the same time. In 2005, Krosnick, Judd and Wittenbrink, and more recently in 2015, Maio and Haddock have written chapters on attitude measurement and together these chapters provide a comprehensive discussion of this topic (Krosnick, Judd & Wittenbrink 2005; Maio & Haddock 2015).

In summary, these various authors have highlighted to a greater or lesser degree both explicit and implicit measures of attitude. In the case of explicit attitude measurement, Likert's summated 5-point and 7-point rating scales have been used extensively in the social, psychological and business literature, but other explicit or direct measures of attitude include Thurstone's 'equal-appearing intervals' (or differential) scale, favorability items, semantic-differential bipolar scales, agree-disagree items and the feelings thermometer (Krosnick, Judd & Wittenbrink 2005:21–63; Sammut 2013:54; Maio & Haddock 2015:10–16). As far as implicit or indirect measures of attitude are concerned, these include the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee & Schwarz 1998) and evaluative priming (Fazio 1995), as well as brain-computer interface or physiological methods such as electromyographic activity, galvanic skin response, positron emission tomography and functional magnetic resonance imagery (Krosnick, Judd & Wittenbrink 2005:21–63; Maio & Haddock 2015:22).

Notwithstanding these measures of attitude, it is important to reiterate that attitudes have three core components, namely an affective (or emotional) component, a behavioural (or conative) component and a cognitive (or thinking) component (Fazio & Olson 2003; Mauss & Robinson 2009; McLeod 2014). These three components of attitude are commonly referred to as the ABC model of attitudes (McLeod 2011). However, as far as the measures of attitude referred to in the above paragraph are concerned, they are argued to measure the broader concept of 'attitude', rather than the specific 'components of attitude' (namely affect, behaviour and cognition). While it may be posited that the broader concept of attitude by implication incorporates the specific components of affect, behaviour and cognition, the reality is, that by moving away from the specific to the broad, certain valuable insight is lost. For this reason, this study attempts to focus on the affective (or emotional) component of attitude measurement. This perspective is discussed in more detail in the section below.

3. The literature contains many definitions of attitude, as reported by authors such as Schwarz and Bohner (2001), Argyriou and Melewar (2011) and Asiegbu, Powei and Iruka (2012). The definition provided here was selected because of its comfortable match with the ABC model of attitudes discussed later in the section.

4. As of December 6 2018.

Emotional measures of consumers' attitudes

Merhabian and Russell (1974) proposed three emotional dimensions to describe human attitudes or perceptions of the world around them, namely pleasure, arousal and dominance. These emotional constructs have been widely adopted in the academic literature on emotion, and Bakker, Van der Voordt, Vink and de Boon (2014:2) provide an extensive list of researchers that have adopted these three constructs in their research over the past four decades (although Bakker et al specifically emphasise that pleasure and arousal are more commonly the focus of the documented research, and dominance to a lesser extent, the reason being that dominance consistently correlates significantly with arousal).

As far as actually measuring emotion is concerned, Desmet (2012), in a chapter on measuring emotions, identifies both non-verbal and verbal approaches to measuring emotion. Non-verbal approaches include either 'expressive' measures captured using facial expression recognition systems/software such as the Facial Action Coding System (Ekman & Friesen 1978), the Maximally Discriminative Facial Moving Coding System (Izard 1979), the Facial Expression Analysis Tool (Kaiser and Wehrle 2001), and Affectiva (www.affectiva.com) (Desmet 2012). Facial muscle activity measured using facial electromyographic activity (EMG) is another expressive, non-verbal method (Desmet 2012). Physiological measures include using methods that measure changes in the autonomous and peripheral nervous systems reflected in responses from measuring brain waves, heart rates, blood pressure, pupillometry, skin temperature and galvanic skin responses (Desmet 2012).

Verbal, or more cognitive approaches, according to Desmet (2012:4), include a range of self-reporting instruments involving rating scales that are useful in that they "can be used to measure any set of emotions, and can be used to measure mixed emotions". Their primary drawback is that they generally require a common understanding of the descriptors used to label the emotions. For this reason, a number of graphic rating scales have been developed using pictograms or visual pictures to represent emotional responses. One of the most common of these is the self-assessment manikins (SAM). SAM is not the only non-verbal graphic rating scale available. The Product Emotion Measurement Instrument (Desmet 2012), the International Affective Picture System (Verschuere, Crombez, Koster 2001), the Nencki Affective Picture System (Riegel, Moslehi, Michałowski, Zurawski, Horvat, Wypych, Jednoróg & Marchewka 2017) and the Affective Slider are examples of other, similar instruments. SAM, however, appears quite effective in measuring emotional state and was designed to capture the constructs of 'pleasure', 'arousal' and 'dominance' (Morris 1995).

DISTILLING A RESEARCH QUESTION FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Although debt and savings arguably have an important economic role to play in the national economy, particularly in the case of South Africa, they also impact on the psyche, attitude and ultimate behaviour of household consumers (Picoult 2009:16). A negative or positive psyche influences consumer confidence, which in turn impacts on consumer attitudes to buying and investment, and willingness to purchase on debt. In the case of debt, Kuchar (2014), in a magazine article on the effects of debt, highlights emotional issues such as anger, frustration, regret, depression, anxiety, resentment, denial, stress, shame, and embarrassment as affecting the individual and these, in turn, are likely to impact on the effectiveness and productivity (i.e. the behaviour) of the individual in society. It is argued that positive savings are likely to have the opposite effect, namely resulting in positive emotions.

Turning to the question of savings, the Aviva Consumer Attitudes Survey (CAS – [Aviva 2014]), undertaken across Europe and surveying some 11 000 people annually, highlighted the continued anxiety of respondents about insufficient savings for retirement (a similar finding compared with Aviva's 2004-08 CAS findings), although the most recent findings appear to have been influenced to some extent by the effects of the 2008-09 financial crisis. The survey also highlighted that as much as a third of respondents do not have a savings product, that respondents expect to work past the usual retirement age, that respondents are taking a more short-term approach to savings, that they prefer cash savings to longer-term investments and that respondents generally felt vulnerable, lacked confidence and felt stressed (Aviva 2014).

As far as the academic literature on the 'attitudes [of 'consumers'/'households'/'individuals'] to debt and savings'⁵, is concerned, the literature appears limited. A search on academic bibliographies such as Ebscohost, Proquest, Scopus and Web of Science, revealed no articles focused on this topic (i.e. "attitude(s) to debt and saving(s)"). Google Scholar, using the preceding keywords and phrases, uncovered a handful of articles but in each instance the question of 'attitudes to debt and savings' was discussed only peripherally in the identified article and was not the focus of the study in question.

This is not to say that the literature does not deal with attitudes to debt and savings, but appears to do so as two separate topics; namely 'attitudes to debt' and 'attitudes to savings'. Numerous authors have written about one or other of these two topics, and the two topics are often viewed from different perspectives. For example, research on attitudes to saving has been pursued from perspectives as diverse as death anxiety (Zaeleskiewicz, Gasiorowska & Keszecir 2013), personality differences (Kirkcaldy, Furnham & Martin 1998), the pension sector (Hardcastle 2012), tax reform (St John & Familton 2011), behavioural economics and human motivation (Loewenstein 2007), non-working women (Velankar, Garud, Singh & Chauhan 2014), and the youth (Tiboh 2015). At the same time research on attitudes to debt have similarly been written from diverse perspectives such as personality factors (Norvilitas, Merwin, Osberg, Roehling, Young, & Kamas, 2006), the youth (Angulo-Ruiz & Pergelova 2015), locus of control (Britt, Cumbie & Bell 2013), national consumer debt (Ironfield-Smith, Keasey, Summers, Duxbury, & Hudson, 2005), and materialism and status (Yeniaras 2016). Most of these articles have been written within the context of a particular country.⁶

However, while much of this research strives to quantify the attitudes in question using attitudinal scales of measurement, no research could be found focusing on measuring consumer attitudes to debt and/or savings from an emotional perspective. This apparent information gap leads to the research question for this study. Given the above literature review, the research question that can be distilled is: Whether the affective (or emotional⁷) component of consumer's attitudes to debt and savings can be measured in such a way as to inform future interventions to changing debt and savings behaviour in South Africa?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative approach involving an online survey to elicit attitudinal measures towards debt and savings using non-verbal SAMs in order to address the abovementioned research question. It should be noted that the research complies with the ethical standards as set by the BMR. The research method is outlined below in terms of the following: population and sample, measuring instrument, data collection procedure analyses.

Population and sample

The population for the online survey consisted of 4 654 adults (18 years and older) recruited by a research institution within a South African university. Eight hundred and eighty-six (886) panel members participated in the survey realising a 19% response rate. The demographic characteristics of the sample are reflected in Figure 1 on the next page.

5. The phrase "attitude to(wards) debt and savings" was used flexibly to include plurals and to switch 'savings' with 'debt' in the phrase. In addition, the adjectives 'household'/'consumer'/'personal'/'individual' were included and excluded as part of the search phrase of to cast the search as wide as possible. Finally, 'emotion(s) toward(s)' and 'view(s) of' were used in addition to 'attitude to(wards)'. All of the findings for these various searches have shaped the discussion above.

6. While there are also several commercial studies that have examined the debt and savings behaviour of consumers (Europe [Le Blanc, Porpiglia, Teppa, Zhu and Ziegelmeyer 2016], China and the USA [Yao, Wang, Weagley and Liao 2011], Germany [Boersch-Supan 2002]; South Africa [Finscope 2016]; India [Prusty 2011]), none of these studies examined the emotional or attitudinal drivers of debt and savings.

7. The authors recognise the fact that affect and emotion are not exactly the same thing. As with so many terms in this field there is also no clear and agreed-upon definition. Nevertheless, affect and emotion are closely related as discussed by Panksepp (2000) and Shouse (2005), with the latter suggesting that affect is a sub-conscious state and emotion is a conscious display of the sub-conscious affect state.

FIGURE 1:

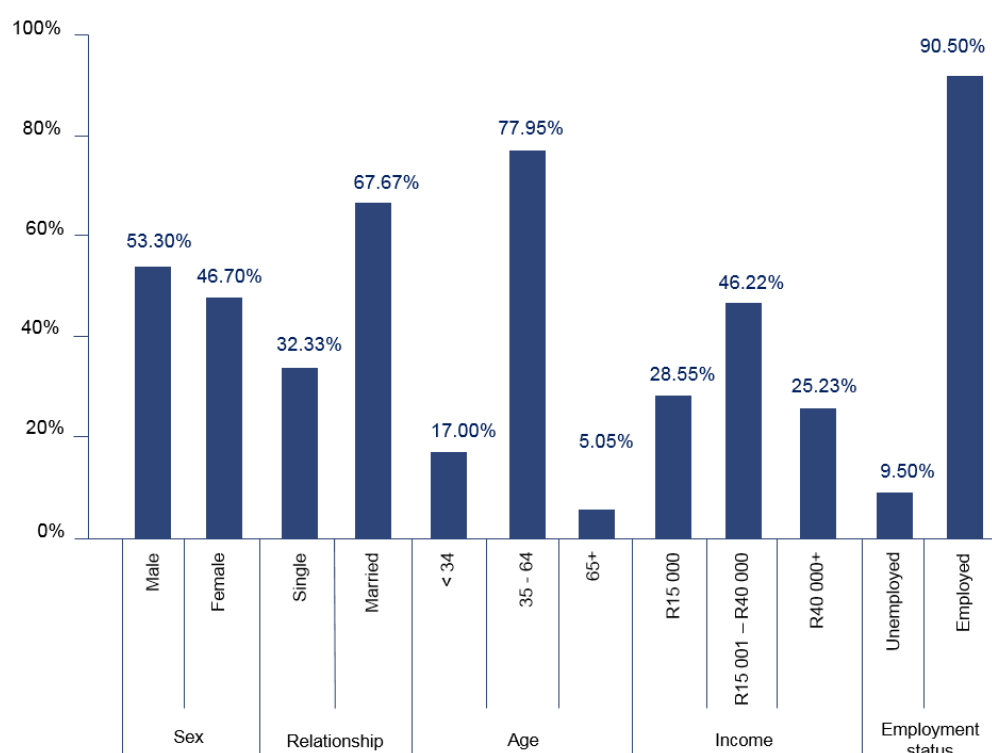


Figure 1 reflects that the realised sample can be described as mostly married, employed, male and between 35 and 64. It needs to be noted that for the purposes of this research the relationship status, age, income and employment status variables have been grouped into larger categories for parsimonious reasons and to simplify the analyses reflected in the findings.

Data collection and analysis

The data for this study was collected by means of an online survey whereby affective reactions to three sets of the self-assessment manikins were measured. The SAM scale is a proprietary measure of emotional response developed by Bradley and Lang (1994) that has been used worldwide in both qualitative and quantitative market research over the past 25 years in over 30 countries. As discussed earlier in the article, SAM is a pictorial or graphic rating instrument to obtain the self-assessed ratings of the primary emotions experienced by respondents with reference to the dimensions of affective valence (or pleasure), arousal and dominance. The instrument can be administered in a paper-based or electronic format, and is relatively simple and cost-effective to implement. Due to the non-verbal design, which requires no literacy, the instrument is usable regardless of the age, educational or cultural background of the respondents. The non-verbal SAM emotional response measure enables researchers to understand and assess emotional connections, motivators, needs and barriers that factor into the market environment. This instrument aims to provide a measure of a respondent's immediate reaction, undiluted by cognitive rationalisation. The respondent is requested to rate his/her immediate emotions, without deliberation, on a nine-point rating scale, which is depicted by static human-like manikins. The immediate emotive response is an important factor that aids in understanding attitudes, preferences and behaviour. It needs to be emphasised that respondents are requested to make instant decisions on the scale and not to deliberate on their responses.

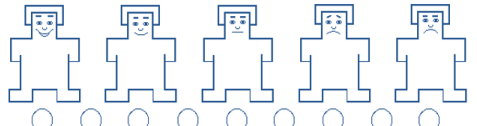
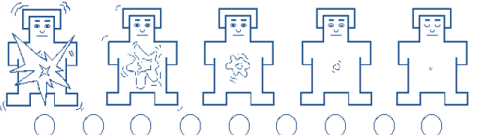
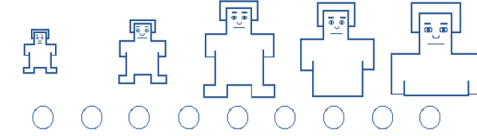
In accordance with the SAM, each emotion consists of three dimensions measured within a three-factor complex of pleasure, arousal and dominance (PAD), namely;

- Pleasure (appeal) - measures like or dislike, in other words, level of appeal elicited from the product or experience, ranging from extremely unpleasant to extremely pleasant. This is the only true positive or negative dimension;
- Arousal (engagement) - measures the level of involvement or excitement elicited from the product or experience, ranging from calm to excited; and

- Dominance (control; empowerment) - measures the level of empowerment or control elicited from the product or experience, which varies from a feeling of being in control of the situation to that of being controlled.

Figure 2 illustrates the SAM model consisting of the following manikin nine-point rating scale, which was translated into a questionnaire. For purposes of this study, the SAM was used for eliciting respondents' feelings based on attitudinal reactions towards savings and debt'. Data were collected, captured electronically and cleaned into a meaningful and useable format. The IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 software programme was used during the analysis.

FIGURE 2:

PLEASURE Pleased, happy or satisfied		PLEASURE Displeased, unhappy or dissatisfied
AROUSAL Engaged, stimulated		AROUSAL Not engaged, calm
DOMINANCE Not in control		DOMINANCE In-control, empowered

6. FINDINGS

The study investigated respondents' attitudes to debt and savings. As mentioned previously, the research methodology included both survey and experimental research making it possible to analyse behavioural reactions to debt and savings at both sub-conscious (feeling) and conscious (thinking) levels. Findings from these measures are presented and discussed in the following sections.

6.1 The SAM insights

As suggested in section 3.3 the two-dimensional analysis adopted in this study generated responses that can be grouped according to a 'high' response (the top three responses on the nine-point scale), 'moderate' response (the middle three responses on the nine-point scale), or 'low' response (the bottom three responses on the nine-point scale), on the basis of either the Pleasure or Arousal dimension. The resultant three-by-three matrix forms nine possible clusters as indicated in Figure 3 below. The matrix in Figure 3 can thus be organised as Low Pleasure (1-3) combined with Arousal in various degrees (1-9) to produce the bottom row of emotions, where low Arousal (1-3), moderate Arousal (4-6) and high Arousal (7-9) result in the Sullen, Troubled and Alarmed segments. Alternatively, moderate Pleasure (4-6) can be combined with Arousal in various degrees (1-9) to produce the middle cluster of emotions, where low Arousal (1-3), moderate Arousal (4-6) and high Arousal (7-9) result in the Indifferent, Ambivalent and Apprehensive segments. Lastly, high Pleasure (7-9) can be combined with Arousal in various degrees to produce the top cluster of emotions, where low Arousal (1-3), average Arousal (4-6) and high Arousal (7-9) are classified as the Comfortable, Warm and Enthusiastic segments. An example of the matrix used in this analysis is displayed in Figure 3 on the next page.

Using the high/moderate/low SAM scales as described above, the specific emotional responses to debt and savings, as solicited by the survey conducted in this study, are discussed in more detail below and the results from the analysis are displayed in table 1 presented at the end of this section. A 'normal' measure of the respondent's response

FIGURE 3

Pleasure	High	Comfortable Relaxed Secure Untroubled Leisurely Respectful	Warmed Capable Confident Carefree Responsible Secure	Enthusiastic Victorious Energetic Alive Exuberant Triumphant
	Moderate	Indifferent Uninterested Unemotional Aloof Unimpressed Subdued	Ambivalent Sheltered Sensitive Embattled Repentant Conforming	Apprehensive Activist Anxious Defiant Startled Radical
	Low Arousal	Sullen Unresponsive Unconcerned Apathetic UnCaring Bored	Troubled Helpless Insecure Rejected Depressed Discouraged	Alarmed Aggravated Terrified Afraid Stressed Fearful
		Low	Moderate	High
		Arousal		

High Pleasure/ Arousal	Moderate-high Pleasure/ Arousal	Moderate Pleasure/ Arousal	High-low Pleasure/ Arousal	Moderate-low Pleasure/ Arousal	Low Pleasure/ Arousal
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to Pleasure and Arousal was included as a benchmark state, resulting, together with individuals' emotive responses to debt and savings, in the initial three sets of matrices in top-most row of table 1, entitled 'Total'.

In addition, the responses were further segmented according to the demographic variables applied to respondents. These included gender (male or female), relationship status (married or not married), age (34 or younger, 35 to 64, or 65 and older), income (R15000 or less per month, R15001 to R40000 per month, or more than R40000 per month), and employment status (employed or unemployed). Given the subcategories for each of these variables, a further 12 rows were identified besides for the first 'total' row (i.e. 13 rows in total), as depicted in table 1. For each of the 13 rows, there was a matrix of responses depicting individuals' 'normal' states (or how they generally feel), a matrix for individuals' responses to questions about debt and a matrix for individuals' responses to questions about savings. This represented a total of 13 times 3 sets of responses (to normal, debt and savings), representing a total of 39 matrices as present in table 1 that follows.

Each of the nine cells in each matrix represents the percentage of respondents whose responses fell into each particular cell. The cells in each matrix was shaded a slightly lighter or darker colour to depict the various percentages of respondents that had selected the cell in question. Generally, the greater the percentage of respondents selecting a particular option (i.e. cell in the matrix), the darker the colour of the cell. The darkest shaded cell depicted the cell with greatest percentage of responses. The darker shaded areas in table 1 denote a greater concentration of consumers in a particular emotive segment.

It is evident from a cursory inspection of the results that, generally, when consumers indicated how they normally feel (i.e. the 'Normally feel' column in Table 1), a greater proportion of consumers expressed high or moderate pleasure and high or moderate arousal, with most of the high-response cells occurring in the upper right-hand side of

each matrix. Therefore, these consumers generally feel positive about their current mood state. The BMR's happiness indices (2012 – 2017) confirm the general mood state evident in this study (Joubert & Poalses, 2016). In contrast to this benchmark 'normal' state, Pleasure and Arousal reaction to 'Savings' elicited an even more positive response across all demographic segments. Reactions to 'Debt' were, on the contrary, very different from the reactions to savings with the major proportion of consumers reacting with low Pleasure, and either low or, occasionally, high Arousal.

TABLE 1

		Normally feel			Savings			Debt			
		Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	
Total	High	12.7	17.2	35.1	19.8	13.0	41.7	2.1	1.6	5.3	
	Moderate	5.0	17.0	3.7	2.9	7.2	2.1	4.6	7.5	3.8	
	Low	6.3	1.0	1.1	7.1	2.4	3.8	32.3	15.8	27.1	
Sex	Male	High	11.7	15.9	34.5	17.8	12.9	43.3	2.3	2.0	17.8
		Moderate	4.5	17.0	3.9	2.9	5.3	1.2	4.4	7.9	2.9
		Low	8.9	1.7	1.9	9.6	2.0	5.0	30.3	17.8	9.6
	Female	High	13.4	18.3	36.6	22.1	12.4	40.3	1.8	1.2	22.1
		Moderate	5.8	17.4	2.7	2.7	9.4	3.0	4.5	7.3	2.7
		Low	3.4	2.1	0.3	4.5	2.7	2.7	33.9	13.9	4.5
Relationship (Binned)	Single	High	10.6	15.9	35.3	19.3	13.5	45.9	1.0	1.9	2.9
		Moderate	6.3	17.4	4.8	2.9	5.3	1.4	2.4	7.7	4.3
		Low	5.8	1.9	1.9	4.3	2.4	4.8	39.4	13.0	27.4
	Married	High	12.8	17.9	35.3	20.1	12.6	40.0	2.7	1.6	6.2
		Moderate	4.8	17.2	3.0	3.0	8.4	2.3	5.3	7.8	3.9
		Low	6.2	2.1	0.7	8.2	2.1	3.4	29.5	17.2	25.9
Age (Binned)	<34	High	9.2	17.4	33.9	13.8	17.4	49.5	1.9	0.9	1.9
		Moderate	8.3	20.2	3.7	3.7	4.6	1.8	4.6	6.5	6.5
		Low	2.8	3.7	0.9	0.9	2.8	5.5	38.0	18.5	21.3
	35-64	High	12.8	17.2	35.2	21.9	11.1	40.9	2.2	1.8	5.2
		Moderate	4.9	16.8	3.8	2.6	8.3	2.2	4.4	8.0	3.4
		Low	6.7	1.4	1.2	7.7	1.8	3.4	32.7	15.2	27.1
	65+	High	16.1	12.9	45.2	12.5	9.4	37.5	3.2	0.0	16.1
		Moderate	3.2	9.7	0.0	6.3	9.4	0.0	6.5	9.7	3.2
		Low	6.5	6.5	0.0	18.8	3.1	3.1	19.4	16.1	25.8
Income (Binned)	<R15000	High	10.4	14.8	32.2	16.7	15.1	43.0	2.7	2.2	4.4
		Moderate	7.7	15.3	7.1	3.8	6.5	1.1	3.3	6.0	4.4
		Low	8.7	3.3	0.5	4.8	2.2	7.0	36.1	13.1	27.9
	R15001 – R40000	High	12.2	17.9	33.1	20.9	14.1	37.0	2.4	1.3	6.7
		Moderate	4.1	20.6	3.0	1.3	8.8	2.0	5.1	9.1	3.0
		Low	6.1	1.7	1.4	9.4	3.0	3.4	33.3	15.5	23.6
	R40000+	High	14.0	18.3	42.7	21.7	8.1	49.7	1.2	1.8	3.0
		Moderate	4.9	14.0	0.6	5.0	5.6	3.1	4.8	7.3	5.5
		Low	3.0	1.2	1.2	5.0	0.6	1.2	28.5	19.4	28.5
Employment (Binned)	Employed	High	11.3	12.9	38.7	15.9	14.3	39.7	3.2	1.6	12.7
		Moderate	8.1	11.3	4.8	0.0	7.9	1.6	1.6	3.2	4.8
		Low	6.5	4.8	1.6	11.1	3.2	6.3	22.2	14.3	36.5
	Unemployed	High	12.2	17.7	35.1	20.3	12.7	42.3	2.1	1.7	4.3
		Moderate	5.0	17.9	3.4	3.3	7.4	2.1	4.8	8.1	3.9
		Low	6.0	1.7	1.0	6.5	2.1	3.4	34.0	16.0	25.2

$r_{\text{total/savings}} = 0.382$ (ps0.01); $r_{\text{total/debt}} = -0.078$ (ps0.05); Shaded areas 0-10%, 10.1-25% and 25%+

Note: Although it is difficult to provide the six shades of variance as depicted in figure 3, in Table 1 an attempt has been made to approximately align the shadings in figure 3 to Table1

TABLE 2:

	Normal feeling (%)	Savings (%)	Debt (%)
Total sample	54.4	60.4	-67.0
Male	49.0	55.7	-37.1
Female	59.4	65.2	-29.0
Single	50.7	65.7	-72.1
Married	55.2	58.3	-63.5
<34	48.5	69.6	-71.2
35-65	54.8	60.6	-66.8
65+	58.0	28.1	-45.3
<R15000	44.3	58.1	-66.7
R15001-R40000	52.9	56.9	-64.1
R40000+	65.3	70.8	-69.7
Employed	46.7	50.9	-52.3
Unemployed	54.7	62.1	-68.0

Table 2 provides an overall emotive valence of the total sample's general feeling and their reactions towards savings and debt. Emotive valence is displayed by the different demographic groups. It is noticeable that the savings valence of 60.4% exceeds the valence to general feeling (54.4%). However, debt elicited a very different reaction with a negative valence of -67.0%. This is indicative of strong negative emotive reactions associated with feelings of stress, fear, helplessness, discouragement and concern.

Reflecting on the concept of valence

Valence, originally introduced by Tolman in 1932 by drawing on a translation of the German word *Aufforderungscharakter*, was used as a synonym of

'charge'. Lewin (1935:77) then used the word in a psychological context to refer to the intrinsic positive or negative character of an emotion towards some event, object, situation or place (Colombetti 2005; Singh 1991:339). Barrett (2006:35), in turn, sees valence as "a basic, invariant building block of emotional life that derives from ... judging whether something is helpful or harmful". Extensively discussed in the literature, valence is seen as "one of the most important scientific concepts at the heart of emotion experience", while Shuman, Sander and Scherer (2013:1) argue that valence captures something essential about affect. Shuman et al (2013) propose that valence has multiple levels, from a macro level to multiple micro-levels that change over time. In comparison with the pleasure-arousal dimensions mentioned earlier, valence is more specifically aligned with the pleasure dimension (i.e. either positive or negative), and valence is often used to describe 'pleasure/displeasure' (Barrett 2006).

While the definition by Colombetti (2005) provided above indicates that valence is about the positive or negative character of an emotion, the definition does not directly specify any strength associated with the valence, although it can be argued that this is implied. Nevertheless, there are differing views on this and Colombetti's article highlights some of the confusion found in the literature around this concept (Colombetti 2005). Some authors see valence as a single value indicating both the positive or negative nature of an emotion as well as the strength (or extremity) of the positiveness/negativeness (Barrett & Russell 1991:10, Lewin 1951), while other authors, see valence as being only about the positive or negative nature of the emotion, while the strength of the positiveness/negativeness is viewed as another, different construct (Alwitt & Berger 1993; Shook, Fazio & Eiser 2006, Stets & Turner 2008:44). In this study, valence is seen as comprising both constructs, namely the positive or negative nature of the emotion and the strength of the emotion being measured (i.e. to debt and savings in this study). In addition, the authors use valence to describe the positive or negative nature and strength of the emotion associated with consumer attitudes to debt and savings as a whole, and not just the pleasure component of the emotion.

The SAM emotional valence to debt and savings based on demographic factors

Demographics that display a more positive savings valence are female, single, younger, unemployed and higher income. These findings are further explored by a comparison of each demographic by emotional valence in figures 4 to 7 that follow.

Figure 4 shows that more males tend to express negative sentiments towards debt whereas fewer males reacted positively towards savings.

FIGURE 4:

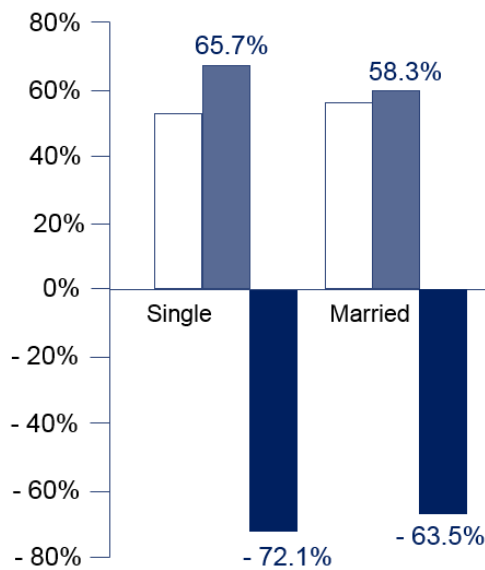


FIGURE 5:

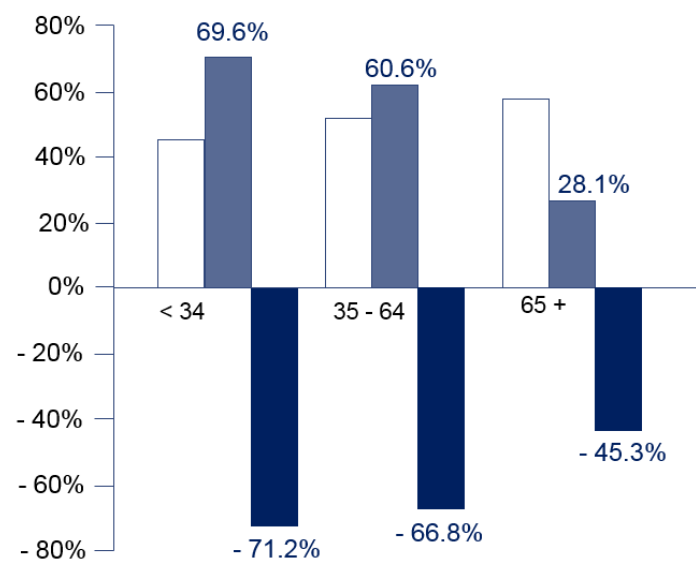


FIGURE 6:

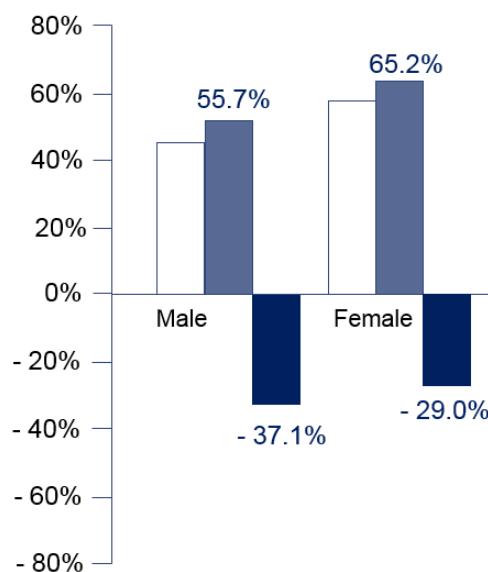
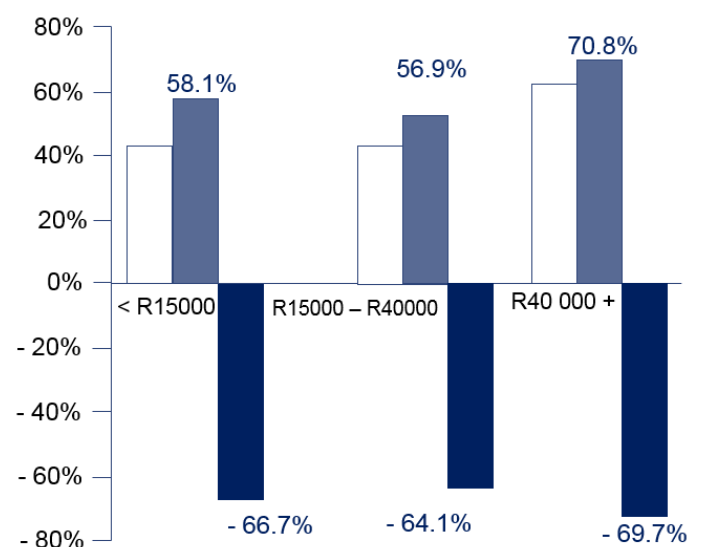


FIGURE 7:



 Normally feel
  Debt
  Savings

Figure 5 reflects a clear age dynamic with fewer consumers from the older cohorts reacting negatively to debt.

Figure 6 shows that more single consumers reacted negatively to debt and positively to savings. The extent of negativity amongst single consumers is also comparable to the younger age group which suggests that younger, single consumers harbour negative feelings toward debt.

Figure 7 shows insignificant differences between the low and middle-income segments. However, more consumers

in the R 40 000 (approximately US\$ 2 860 [May 2019]) income-per-month segment reacted negatively to debt and positively toward saving.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The SAM measures indicated that more consumers expressed positive attitudes towards the concept of savings compared to the number that expressed a general positive mood state. In contrast, debt resulted in a very different response pattern whereby the major proportion of consumers reacted towards the negative attitudinal SAM segments. These results were substantiated by a negative debt valence and a positive savings valence. The findings support the logic that respondents would ideally prefer to save rather than incur debt.

The reality in South Africa, however, paints a different picture with high levels of debt and negative savings. This apparent contradiction points to extraneous drivers rather than attitudinal drivers of indebtedness. In other words, circumstances rather than choice appear to be driving indebtedness and low savings in South Africa. This places consumers under further pressure as they are forced into a situation that they are not comfortable with and this has been reflected in the near zero consumer confidence index for most of 2016/7 (Bureau for Economic Research [BER] 2018). Consumer confidence, in turn, impacts on business confidence and, not surprisingly, South Africa's economy has been in the doldrums as alluded to at the start of this article.

The behavioural impact which these attitudes have can be partly explained by Prospect Theory. Prospect Theory provides a behavioural model that explains how people decide between alternatives that involve risk and uncertainty by demonstrating that people are loss-averse, and since individuals dislike losses more than an equivalent gain, they are more willing to take risks in order to avoid a loss (Kahneman, 1971; Kahneman, 2011; Barberis 2013). Higher levels of debt could therefore result in more risky financial behaviour exacerbating the debt trap in which many South African consumers find themselves in.

The findings also indicated that there are demographic differences between consumers' emotional valence towards debt and savings. Demographic segments that displayed a more positive savings valence are female, single, younger, unemployed and higher income consumers. Behavioural reactions expressive of attitudes on particularly the SAM instrument revealed that more males tend to express negative sentiments towards debt, whereas fewer males reacted positively towards savings which tends to suggest higher levels of loss aversion among males. In this regard, males are anthropologically regarded as the stronger sex who are stereotypically expected to provide and protect and are therefore more negative to possible losses or increasing debt.

From the research, it is clear that consumer demographics such as age, income, gender and employment status, lifestyle and certain psychological traits influence financial behaviour. Therefore, it is recommended that financial institutions and organisations that deal with debt and savings investigate the demographic and psychographic profile of their clientele continuously to assist in understanding their financial behaviour more fully. Equivalent levels of debt and savings evoke very different attitudinal valence.

An important outcome from this study is that the strength of negative valence to debt is significantly more than their positive valence to savings. Findings suggest that aversion is more intense than attraction, supporting the views purported in Prospect Theory. Additional physiological and neuroscience insights into consumers' emotive reactions to debt and savings could contribute greatly to this novel research, providing further valuable insights. These findings also serve as a useful benchmark for future longitudinal research to measure the changes in valence to savings and debt in South Africa, from year to year.

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